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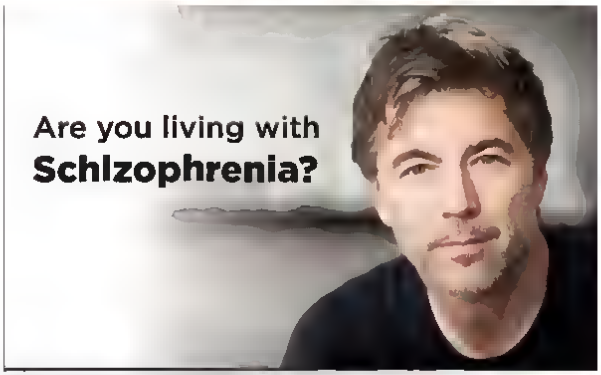

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CHRISTOPHER VICTORIO

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Photo Illustration by Isa Lyfe, from "smallasaGIANT" photo exhibit Design by Michael Ziobrowski

ORANGE FEATHERS »

FELIPE FLORES

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Wed, May 22, 8 p.m. Free Lecture "Notre Dame"
Sunday, May 26, 6 p.m. "The Magickal Mysteries of Salt" Workshop $20
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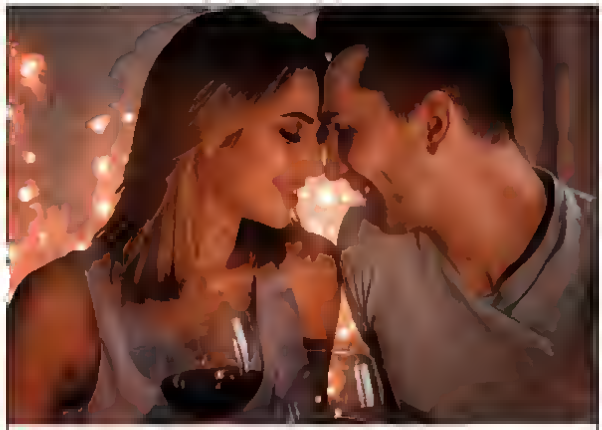

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Thick Blue Line

Some Southern California cops serve to protect their own

If there's one consistently troubling criminal-justice-system theme running from one era to the next in Southern California, it's that numerous law-enforcement bureaucracies are ethical cesspools—or, worse, criminal operations hiding behind badges, Glocks and aggressive, taxpayer-funded media spin doctors.

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» R. SCOTT MOXLEY

That fact isn't debatable.

Consider a few of the embarrassments racked up in the past decade. Orange County Sheriff Mike Carona and his two top assistant sheriffs, Don Haidl and George Jaramillo, were convicted for corruption. That mess led to the rise in the OC Sheriff's Department (OCSD) of Sandra Hutchens, a two-faced liar whom the California Court of Appeal rebuked in 2016 for overseeing systemic, unconstitutional jail capers to rob pretrial defendants of fair trials.

Meanwhile, in Los Angeles, Sheriff Lee Baca and his undersheriff, Paul Tanaka, routinely acted above the law. Both are now convicted felons.

Veteran journalist Matthew McGough recently published a mesmerizing, phenomenally researched account of such entrenched law-enforcement muck. *The Lazarus Files* focuses on the February 1986 murder of Sherri Rasmussen, a 29-year-old director of critical-care nursing at an LA hospital. Through incompetence, villainy or a combination of both, the case went unsolved for decades inside the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). A killer had entered Rasmussen's home on a Monday morning, ambushed her, savagely hit her arm, repeatedly cracked her skull, fired three fatal bullets into her chest, staged a burglary-gone-wrong scene, left the victim wearing expensive jewelry, then calmly resumed her day job as an LAPD cop.

But as McGough documents, Stephanie Lazarus not only escaped justice, but also thrived in the department for the next 23 years. She rose in rank, won cushy assignments, filled private-diary entries with her regular dream destination (a tanning salon), spent hours dining while on duty, visited boyfriends and slept in a patrol car she'd parked in secluded areas. Department brass frequently promoted this murderer, including to internal-affairs work, and celebrated her supposed "loyalty, attention to duty and unselfish work ethics."

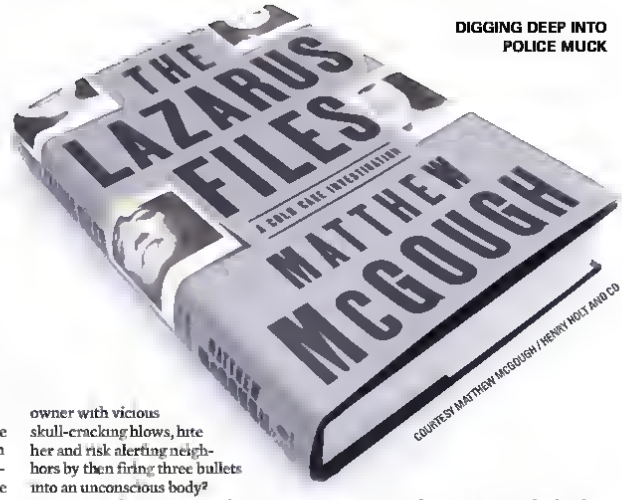
Lazarus should have been a suspect from the outset, especially given that overkill is often a sign the murderer knew and hated the victim. The cop had been a sex partner of UCLA classmate John Ruetten, Rasmussen's husband. She also told Ruetten's mother of her intense disappointment that he'd married another woman. Before her death, Rasmussen advised her parents that she felt stalked and that one of her husband's ex-girlfriends—an LAPD cop, no less—had entered their home without permission to frighten her. Other witnesses also knew that Lazarus had visited Rasmussen's workplace in an effort to wreck the marriage by saying she'd had sex with Ruetten during their engagement.

But LAPD detectives assigned to solve the murder must have never watched an episode of *Columbo*. Even a casual viewing of the show would have provided the elementary roadmap for how actor Peter Falk carefully studied clues, sidestepped misdirection traps and ultimately got the bad guy. Columbo repeatedly badgered his suspects with "just one more thing" questions.

That type of curiosity never surfaced in this real-life case. Detectives ignored Lazarus' ties to Ruetten, incredibly, she may have never been interviewed. Nor did their investigation note that in the days after the murder, she reported as stolen her LAPD-issued backup revolver, a Smith & Wesson model 49—the same type of weapon used to beat and shoot Rasmussen.

"The total absence of documentation in the LAPD's typed [chronological probe log] and follow-up reports that Stephanie was ever contacted or interviewed in 1986, along with her silence on the subject in her diary, suggest that she was off the radar of the detectives who initially investigated Sherri's murder," wrote McGough, who reports that when pressed to explain a lack of interest in their colleague, detectives said, "This is not going anywhere."

Instead, the LAPD sleuths claimed they deduced that a male burglar must have killed Rasmussen. But why would a burglar leave so many valuables behind and in plain sight? Why would a burglar drive the victim's BMW to a heavily Latino neighborhood and leave it there when there was no police pursuit, instead of taking it to a chop shop for cash? Why would a burglar neutralize the homeowner with vicious skull-cracking blows, bite her and risk alerting neighbors by then firing three bullets into an unconscious body?



DIGGING DEEP INTO POLICE MUCK

COURTESY MATTHEW MCGOUGH / HENRY HOLT AND CO

Yet, according to McGough, just 43 days into the unsolved case, then-police chief Daryl Gates, a Dana Point resident who died in 2010, praised the detectives for their "good work ... talent, attention to detail and diligence."

The Lazarus Files produces powerful hints the killer cop may have escaped justice with sinister assistance. After Rasmussen's frustrated parents pressed for renewed attention to crime-scene recoveries, a detective checked out the forensic evidence from the crime lab and never returned it. Asked later to explain his actions, the officer claimed ignorance.

Luckily, one piece of forensic evidence remained—a swab from the killer's deep bite mark in Rasmussen's arm—but only because the coroner's office had stored it separately. In 2005, Jennifer Francis, an LAPD criminalist, analyzed the swab for DNA and determined the major contributor contradicted the department's stubborn theory of the killing.

"Francis was stunned by the realization that it was a woman who bit Sherri," McGough wrote.

The criminalist reported the news to the LAPD detective who'd assumed control of the 19-year-old case, but he, too, immediately dismissed Lazarus as a suspect. "She was not part of this," McGough quotes the cop saying.

When the case finally landed with Detective Jim Nuttall four years later, he saw Francis' bombshell DNA conclusion and recalled the lone mention of Lazarus in the massive murder book authored by the original case investigators. "John Ruetten called—verified Stephanie Lazarus—[police officer] was former girlfriend."

To Nuttall and his partners, "The execution-style manner of Sherri's death appeared consistent with the elimination of a witness who could have identified her killer," according to McGough.

Because Lazarus had access to the agency's investigatory files, Nuttall's team launched a secret plan that identified their target only as candidate No. 5. They also succeeded in quietly obtaining her DNA from a discarded soda cup. A day later, she was officially linked to the bite mark, arrested and, in 2012, sent to prison for a term of 27 years to life. Then-Chief Bill Bratton called a press conference, hailing the LAPD's work as "a very positive reflection on us, in the sense that we take our oaths seriously."

But that oath took a serious detour again in the wake of Lazarus' takedown. Despite the true professionalism of Nuttall and his colleagues, department management demanded these detectives stop working on another cold-case murder. They confiscated all the files related to the unsolved 1988 killing of 26-year-old Catherine Braley.

McGough notes that the last person known to have seen Braley alive was a veteran LA County sheriff's deputy who'd tried to have sex with her in his police car after he'd gone on a wild, 11-hour bar binge.

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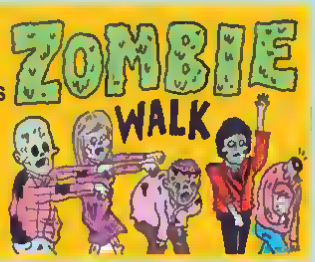

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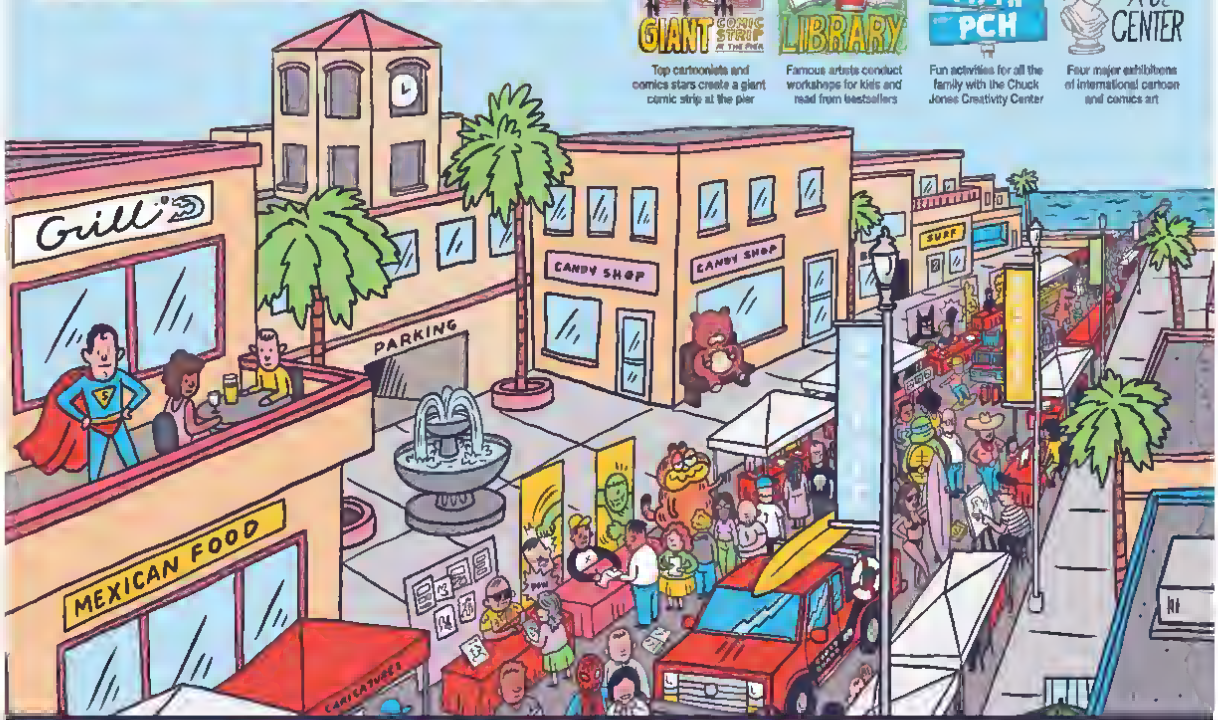

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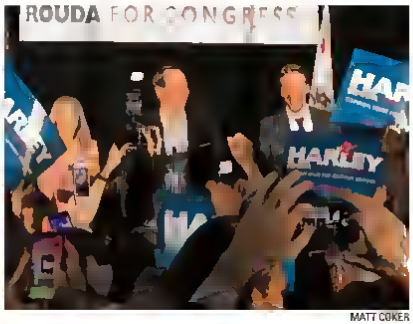

MATT COKER

Two mayors, a prosecutor, a county supervisor, two city council members and a veteran congressman's chief of staff are among the Republicans seeking to win back Orange County congressional seats from four freshmen Democrats in 2020.

Just as their Democratic counterparts had done before the 2018 election, Republican leaders believe—or, at least, say they believe—the incumbents are vulnerable.

Politico agrees when it comes to the 39th Congressional District, calling it one of the "most vulnerable" in California. The seat, which represents parts of Orange, Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties, was barely won in November by Representative Gil Cisneros (D-Fullerton). His opponent, Young Kim, who was Cisneros predecessor Ed Royce's chief of staff before the longtime lawmaker retired, recently tossed her hat back into the ring.

In the 45th Congressional District, Representative Katie Porter (D-Irvine) already has these Republicans lining up to take her out: Yorba Linda City Councilwoman Peggy Huang, Laguna Hills City Councilman Don Sedgwick, Mission Viejo Mayor Greg Raths and county prosecutor Ray Gennawey.

On April 25, Orange County Supervisor Michelle Park Steel, who is married to California's Republican National Committeeman Shawn Steel, appeared before business supporters in Los Angeles to announce she will run against 48th Congressional District Representative Harley Rouda (D-Newport Beach).

And in the 49th Congressional District, which covers parts of southern Orange County and northern San Diego County, San Juan Capistrano Mayor Brian Maryott recently said he'll challenge Representative Mike Levin (D-Dana Point).

Republicans hold registration edges in those districts, but President Donald Trump's unpopularity coupled with well-funded ground games helped put Democrats over the top in each once all the ballots were counted.

Besides raising cash, the GOP and its candidates are branding the new Democrats as being too progressive for their constituencies, saying their districts did not turn blue, as portrayed in the media, but purple.

Democrats are countering with registration drives to further close the gap with Republicans and branding the GOP candidates as Trump lackeys, especially Kim and Steel.

"Trump at the top of the ticket is the No. 1 handicap to Republicans in those districts," Rob Stutzman, a veteran GOP political strategist based in Sacramento, recently told McClatchy News Service. "No question."

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HeyYou!

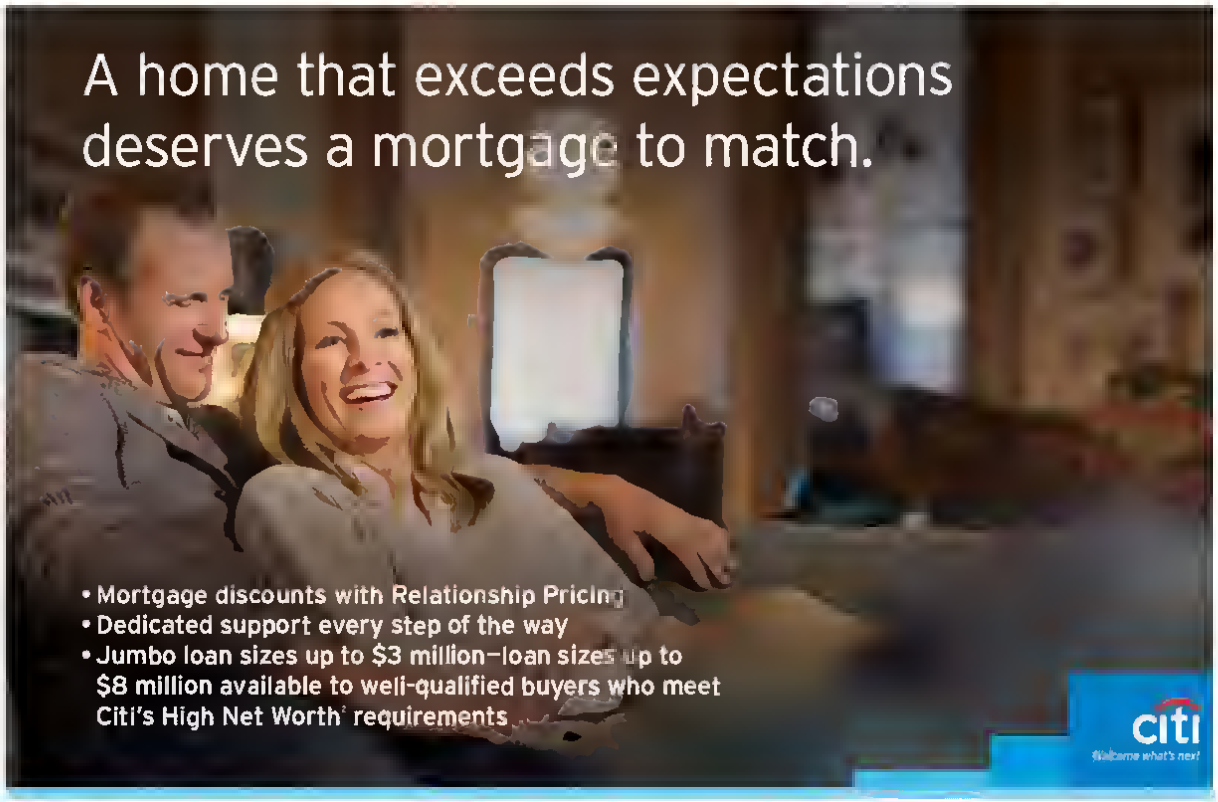
» ANONYMOUS

Sloppy Jalopy

BOB AUL

My daughter bought a used Nissan from your Santa Ana lot last fall. She sure was excited to have her own wheels—and so was I. Not only was it an important milestone for her, as she is growing up and becoming more independent, but it was also helpful for our family to no longer have to constantly split two cars three ways. Six months later, the car lies dead in our carport with a transmission that will cost upward of $5,000 to replace—in addition to the $6,000 bank loan she took out to buy the car. It turns out this particular kind of Nissan transmission is fairly notorious among repairmen for failure, so if our mechanic were already aware of this fact and recognized the warning signs right before it died, then it follows that you did, too. Yet you went ahead and sold a car you knew had weeks to live to a young lady who was a first-time buyer. Admittedly, she should have done her homework better and will learn from this experience, but you should have consulted your conscience—if you have one that is. Caveat emptor this, baby, and may the Sunset on your car dealership.

HEY, YOU! Send anonymous thanks, confessions or accusations—changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent—to "Hey, You!" c/o *OC Weekly*, 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at letters@ocweekly.com.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STAYING POWER

TUNG NGUYEN CHANGED HIS LIFE IN PRISON, BEAT DEPORTATION AND HELPS OTHERS RESIST TRUMP'S WAR ON VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

A hip-hop concert inside San Quentin State Prison came to a harrowing halt one morning in 2006, with bass-rattling beats replaced by the sounds of a blaring alarm. Tung Nguyen, an inmate serving a life sentence after a first-degree-murder conviction for a Garden Grove slaying, knew a riot had erupted before prison guards ordered everyone to get on the ground. He saw a rumble in the crowd, one that transformed moments later into visible punches flying between black and Mexican inmates.

Tasked with acting as security for rappers, nonprofit workers and volunteers, Nguyen ignored the prison guards' commands. Instead, he flashed an instinctual look at a half-dozen others from his inmate activity group, each member of which understood the need to shield visitors from the melee. "Once we formed a line, I could see the fear in their eyes," says Nguyen. "We ushered them to safety."

By the time they came back, prison guards quelled the riot but allowed the group to stay behind and clean up. They later debriefed on the morning's mayhem. "The prison guards actually said we did a good job maintaining the peace," Nguyen recalls. "Nobody ever talked about it after that until I went to the parole board two years later."

His heroics proved pivotal in showing himself to be a changed man. But despite his best efforts, he was denied parole in 2008, with one board member deriding him as an "assassin." The inmate, who spent his entire adult life behind bars but wasn't the fatal stabber in the 1994 murder, didn't give up hope. He traded his job at the Catholic chapel for study time at San Quentin's law library. Two years later, Nguyen won parole with a release date set in 2023.

He'd still be locked inside prison today if not for an intervention from then-California Governor Jerry Brown in 2011. Reviewing all parole decisions for that year, the governor's office reversed 71 of them and modified only one: Nguyen's case.

"Mr. Nguyen was commended by a correctional lieutenant in 2009 for his role in escorting a group of approximately 50 civilians to safety when they found themselves on the prison yard during an inmate riot in 2006," Brown wrote in an April 1, 2011, decision. "The lieutenant made a point of commending Mr. Nguyen for his courage in protecting the civilians in the face of possible retaliation by rioting inmates, and concluded that this incident showed the 'authentic change' in his decision making that he had undergone since his incarceration."

WELCOMED HERE

In ordering his immediate release, Brown allowed Ngoyen to walk out as a free man for the first time since being imprisoned at 16 years old. But his freedom proved shortlived. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) waited outside San Quentin and took him into custody, detaining him for two weeks inside a federal building in San Francisco. A Vietnamese refugee when he arrived with his family to Orange County in the early 1990s, Nguyen's conviction cost him his green card.

Worrying about being deported to Vietnam didn't weigh heavily at first; a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the United States and Vietnamese governments offered protections against repatriations for Vietnam War refugees such as Nguyen, who arrived before July 12, 1995.

But anxiety arose when Donald Trump campaigned for the presidency in 2015, stirring up a wave of xenophobia against non-white immigrants. After becoming president, the chill became real in 2017, when ICE arrested and detained Vietnamese refugees with past criminal convictions, fears also ran rampant through Little Saigon in OC, the largest such ethnic enclave in the nation following a post-war wave of Vietnamese "boat people" refugees, about Trump seeking to renegotiate the MOU to have Vietnam accept more deportees, pre-1995 or not.

The targeting of a population once considered off-limits sent shockwaves through the Vietoamese American community, including its loyal Republican base in OC.

"Before Trump came into office, the campaign itself already instilled fear in me," says Nguyen. "After the election, my sense of freedom died."

Born a year after the Fall of Saigon in 1975, Nguyen grew up in Ho Chi Minh City, as the capital was renamed under communist rule. His father fought against the government as a soldier in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. Nguyen witnessed local police harass his father. As his son, Nguyen was treated unfairly at school. Sure, Nguyen's parents passed down an anti-communist animus, but he began developing that sentiment on his own against the guvernment and police. "I didn't even know what my future could be," he says. "On top of that, I kept hearing my family talk about how when I reached a certain age, the government was going to enroll me in a military school."

To avoid that, the Nguyen family left Vietnam in 1991, stopping at a refugee camp in the Philippines before settling in the United Stated. Nguyen's mother had an uncle who lived in Santa Ana, he helped them move into an apartment that was nicer than their digs in Vietnam. Nguyen enrolled at Saddleback High School while still adjusting to life in a new country. "The first six months were rough," he says. "There were a lot of Vietnamese students, but at the same time, I got looked at like I was weird. After school, I'd take my backpack and hurry home, where at least my brothers were."

Getting called a "nip" by classmates and sitting by himself every lunch period only fueled the isolation. The freshman finally found a sense of belonging when Vietnamese gang members approached him one day. "After school, they asked me if I wanted to hang out," Nguyen recalls. "I decided I wanted to gu kick it with them." Soon, he started sporting baggy pants fastened with a military web belt that hung down by the side. He shaved his head, save for lengthy, slicked-back bangs.

"I hated gang members when I first came here," says Nguyen. "I despised them, but I ended up becoming one of them."

When not ditching and stealing from department stores, Nguyen got into fights at school. In one incident, he defended himself from three teens who pummeled him, trying to stab one with a dart. The tussle got him expelled from Saddleback High.

Another fight, on April 13, 1993, almost cost him his life. A friend of Nguyen's had gotten into a heated argument over the phone with Tuan Truong, an old acquaintance who owed him money. Nguyen got into a black Isuzu with two friends and headed to the Inn Cal Motel in Garden Grove to teach Truong a lesson in respect. "We were supposed to go there just to talk shit, let these two fools beat the shit out of each other, and then go home," he says. Armed with knives, the trio barged into Truong's room. Nguyen held one person at knifepoint while acting as lookout. In the midst of the motel melee, Nguyen's friend stabbed Truong's thigh, a fatal puncture to the 20-year-old's femoral artery.

PHAM

At one point, Nguyen peered through the curtain and saw a police car outside the motel. When he looked again, it disappeared from sight. Believing they were in the clear, the trio returned to their Isuzu and sped off. A Garden Grove policeman heard a radio call shortly after about a slain victim at the motel he had just patrolled. He had already pulled over the Isuzu and later discovered blood stains on Nguyen's friends. "Bloody Trio Arrested After Fatal Stabbing," read the headline of the *Los Angeles Times* the following morning. Because Nguyen was a minor, the story identified him as a 16-year-old from Santa Ana.

Tried as an adult, he stood accused of first-degree murder and robbery alongside his associates. "I never thought I'd be convicted," he says. "I thought I'd get in trouble for my participation to the degree that I was there." But the verdict found Nguyen guilty of all charges against him. All that he could do in that stunning moment was stare at the Superior Court judge's nameplate, which read, "Judge David O. Carter."

"After the jury verdict, I lost it," Nguyen says. "I didn't care anymore." When he headed back to a Santa Ana courtroom for sentencing, another man in the inmate van tried to start an argument. A sheriff's deputy later escorted him and his accoster into a holding cell. "As soon as the deputy took off my handcuffs, I piled on him," Nguyen recalls. "That incident got reported to the judge." Carter, now in the public eye as a U.S. District Judge at the forefront of a landmark OC homelessness lawsuit, sentenced Nguyen to 25 years to life with harsh words he'd ultimately prove wrong. "You cannot be redeemed!"

LE

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ZIOROWSKI

Freed from prison, Nguyen hustled odd jobs and construction gigs. It made money, but as a studious inmate who learned how to advocate for himself, Nguyen sharpened a skill set better suited for community organizing. At San Quentin, he formed the KidCAT group for juvenile lifers like himself. In and out of prison, Nguyen successfully advocated for state laws such as Senate Bill 260 that called for earlier parole hearings—ones that'd offer due consideration for inmates convicted before turning 18—later revised to 23. Seeing a need in the community, Nguyen also founded the Asian & Pacific Islanders Re-entry of OC (APIROC).

But the activist shifted his focus from juvenile-justice reform to immigration in 2017, when he began hearing about deportation cases affecting the Vietnamese community. His phone soon flooded with calls for help. Responding to the overwhelming anxiety in the community, he formed the Vietnamese Anti-Deportation Network—and the work hasn't stopped since.

"I started constantly handling cases," says Nguyen. "People got detained. I explained to them what happened. Basically, I became a case manager."

A key document in the fight comes in the form of the MOU between the U.S. and Vietnam. It offered clear guidelines on deportations for almost a decade. "Vietnamese citizens are not subject to return to Vietoam under this agreement if they arrived in the United States before July 12, 1995, the date on which diplomatic relations were re-established between the U.S government and the Vietnamese government," reads an important passage.

But all that changed when Trump began ramping up enforcement actions against Vietnamese refugees, including those who arrived before 1995, while the Department of Homeland Security confirmed meeting with the Vietnamese Embassy.

"The United States and Vietoam signed a bilateral agreement on removals in 2008 that establishes procedures for deporting Vietnamese citizens who arrived in the United States after July 12, 1995, and are subject to final orders of removal," James Thrower, a spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi, told *The Atlantic* in December. "While the procedures associated with this specific agreement do not apply to Vietoamese citizens who arrived in the United States before July 12, 1995, it does not explicitly preclude the removal of pre-1995 cases."

And those cases started to pile up.

Tania Pham and Alexandra Le, two local Vietnamese American attorneys, note an influx over the past two years. "Before Trump, the pre-1995 Vietoamese were detained for only 90 days, and then they'd get released," says Pham. "Now, many of them have been detained for more than six months, and some of them were approaching more than a year. I was getting calls all around the country and didn't know what to do. I couldn't possibly file a habeas corpus for every single person."

Uneasy conversations within the community followed, especially since cases involved Vietnamese refugees with criminal pasts. "It's a shame, really, because we're like ostriches," says Le. "We still have the mentality of shame and think that we have to hide the bad things about ourselves and our community. Yes, we have relatives and friends who did something a long time ago that they might not be so proud of. But, hey, they grew, overcame and became successful."

Prominent Vietnamese American politicians in OC weighed in with surprising stances. Huntington Beach-based state Assemblyman Tyler Diep and county Supervisor Andrew Do, both Republicans who came to the U.S. as refugees, signed a Dec. 13, 2018, letter to the president that asked him to reconsider his policies. Michelle Park Steel, a Korean American county supervisor, followed up seven days later with an op-ed in the *Washington Times*. "We've seen the deadly effect of criminal illegal aliens being released to wander our streets due to California's 'sanctuary' laws," Steel wrote, affirming her past support for Trump's lawsuit against the state. "However, deporting Vietnamese refugees who have committed crimes is not in the same category, nor does it call for the same arguments for deporting criminal illegals."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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STAYING POWER

» FROM PAGE 11

Democrats also gave Trump an earful that same month. Congressman Alan Lowenthal (D-Long Beach) led a coalition of 26 House members who expressed dismay with the administration's agenda. "Since 2008, the MOU has not been renegotiated," the Dec. 13 letter read. "We strongly oppose any renegotiation of the MOU that strips the current protections afforded to Vietnamese refugees, including the exclusion from the agreement of pre-1995 immigrants and the humanitarian considerations provided to all others."

JEANETTE DURAN

Nguyen helped to organize a protest on the streets of Little Saigon in December that brought dozens out in Westminster to oppose any such effort. "They're beginning to see the wrongs of it now, even with the Trump supporters," Nguyen says of his community. "The Vietnamese move very fast. Even for me, right now, with the amount of work having been done since 2017 to get to this conversation is pretty fast."

Beyond protests, there are hopes of codifying the MOU into law. Lowenthal favors the idea but hedges hopes of the 2020 election changing the balance of power in Washington, D.C. "Codifying this while the administration is in the process of reinterpreting it is highly unlikely at this moment," he says. "The big issue that we have to do right now is comprehensive immigration reform. This might be a part of those discussions that we're going to have."

With ICE targeting Vietnamese refugees, Pham's long list of potential clients became an important resource for a class-action lawsuit filed by Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAAJ) in February 2018, another front in the fight against Trump's deportation machine. Both fluent Vietnamese speakers, Pham and Le began visiting the Theo Lacy facility in Orange, where they interviewed detainees. Phi Nguyen, an Atlanta-based staff attorney with AAAJ, came across similar cases in Georgia.

Hoang Trinh and Vu Ha, two of the four lead plaintiffs in the suit, are both OC residents who came as pre-1995 refugees. Trinh spent seven months at Theo Lacy after serving a year sentence for possession of a marijuana plant. Ha stayed at the private Adelanto Detention Center for five months following a robbery conviction. Both had criminal records less harsh than Nguyen's but suffered lengthier spells in the hands of immigration authorities.

The suit noted between 8,000 and 10,000 Vietnamese people were in the U.S. with deportation orders, most of whom were pre-1995 arrivals. The U.S. claimed that Vietnam was "willing to consider" pre-1995 repatriations, but then did an about-face in September. That's when an ICE official acknowledged that such refugees are no longer "significantly likely to be removed to Vietnam in the reasonably foreseeable future."

But ICE's word is no grounds for settlement in the class-action suit. "That's what they say right now, and there's no guarantee that they won't change their position tomorrow with any transparency as to why," says Christopher Lapinig, a staff attorney with AAAJ. "That's why we continue to litigate this lawsuit and make sure there's something more than just a statement from ICE."

Since the court filing, it appears that pre-1995 detainees are no longer being held for extended periods of time. In reviewing monthly reports by ICE, Lapinig believes that there's only a handful left in detention. The four plaintiffs named are no longer in

custody themselves But both AAAJ and the plaintiffs it represents seek a resolution that will keep Vietnamese refugees from indefinite detention by establishing their class-based constitutional rights. Even with such a judgement in their favor, it'd still leave other questions unresolved

"The lawsuit doesn't address the underlying deportation orders that individuals have," says Lapinig. "It's really just focused on the practice of the detention and the period of time in which people are held. Even for our lead plaintiffs, we've encouraged them to procure immigration attorneys so that they can address their underlying deportation orders."

For Nguyen that meant preparing for an April 23 hearing in San Francisco that, thanks to former Governor Brown, proved a formality. In the backdrop of California's clashes with the Trump administration over immigration, Brown granted Nguyen a pardon the day before Thanksgiving.

"In recognizing that a pardon may permit Mr. Nguyen to remain in the country, a volunteer Catholic chaplain at San Quentin Prison wrote that a pardon would give Mr Nguyen the opportunity to continue his advocacy and re-integration work with recently pamled individuals," Brown wrote "Tung Thanh Nguyen has paid his debt to society and earned a full and unconditional pardon."

The night before Nguyen's final court hearing, he made sure to crash in bed, hoping to avoid a flood of "what if" thoughts "Going back to court one more time really made me nervous," says Nguyen. "Everyone thought it was a done deal, but it's never done until a judge says so." It helped to have half-a-dozen supporters come with him for the big day, including Pham and Le Together, they headed into an inconspicuous bank building in San Francisco where a small immigration court rested a few floors up

Judge Arwen Swink called Nguyen's case early in the morning and quickly asked for Brown's pardon letter But Nguyen had framed and proudly hung it in his home Representing Nguyen, Pham noted she sent a copy to the court and explained where the original was Swink appeared to receive the update warmly, turning to the attorney representing the government to see if there were any objections, none existed.

Shortly after, the hearing ended with the termination of Nguyen's deportation order Swink smiled and wished him the best of luck in life—a complete turnabout from the scolding he received as a teenager in criminal court.

A week later, Nguyen showed no signs of slowing down He gives an interview with Nua Vong Trai Dat TV over Facetime while sitting at a table in Garden Grove Plaza. But Nguyen's not talking about his case; he's rallying the urgent cause of Long Bao Ho, a father and bushand who bas been out of jail for a decade after pleading guilty to an ecstasy-pill racket when he was a 19-year-old college student (see R. Scott Moxley's "Vietnamese Teen Became Role Model After 'Ecstasy' Pills Rap, Now Faces Deportation," April 23) Since then, he has joined Ngoyen's APIROC group, earned a bachelor's degree and started a successful career and family

Ho's gaining community and congressional support but is slated to be deported as early as this month. "We're now helping [Ho], who, unfortunately, came in 1998," says Lowenthal, who once accompanied Nguyen to an ICE check-in alongside Congressman Lou Correa (D-Santa Ana) "He doesn't have the [pre-1995] protection."

But Nguyen hopes there's still a way to keep him home, pulling up the MOU on his smartphone and pointing to Article 2, Section 4, in which the Vietnamese government "may request a humanitarian reconsideration" if they receive information not previously considered by the U S government. In Ho's case, that's family separation. "There's a lot of media exposure about the pre-1995 refugees," says Nguyen. "We haven't talked about how it's also unfair to deport post-1995 refugees."

Others, such as Tm Thang, hope to follow Nguyen's path to a pardon Released on parole thanks to SB 260, Thang served 22 years and six months in prison after being convicted for two second-degree murders committed when be was 17 "Everything that helped me change my destructive behavior, I did it," says Thang. "I demonstrated all the positive change that I accomplished while I was in prison." ICE held him at Adelanto for eight months following his 2017 release Thang nervously checked in with the agency just last month and is working to submit a pardon request to Governor Gavin Newsom.

When asked about taking a hreak from the action, Nguyen tilts his head back and laughs heartedly. "It's not right for me to just walk away with a pardon when there's a lot of people that still need help," he says. "But then, it's draining me emotionally and psychologically." Nguyen may be free, but the past eight years have cost him a lot, including his marriage. After his ex-wife suffered a miscarriage, Nguyen hid fears of trying to start a family again—lest he be deported away from them While no longer afraid of going back to Vietnam, he points to what he doesn't have in America. savings, a bome, a career

What he does have is an endless demand for his activism. "Now that my deportation ordeal is over, I realize that I have a problem with working too much," he says "I want to be able to manage and balance my time so that I'll he able to live free."

Nguyen also muses about going back to school, becoming a citizen and writing a book about his life experiences He even wants to return to Vietnam to visit and help deportees there

The possibilities finally seem endless, a far cry from the incarceration- and deportation-hampered hopes of yesteryear.

"America is built on the foundation of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," says Nguyen. "When I first came here as a young kid, I was given that opportunity and messed it up Now, I've been given a second chance, a restored opportunity to go forward."

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fri/05/10

[CONCERT]

NOT PRETENDING, NOT DEAD

L7

The original four-woman lineup is back with legendary LA feminist grunge-punk band L7's new album, *Scatter the Rats*. Arriving on the boot heels of a recent anti-DonaldTrump (no kidding) single called "Dispatch From Mara-Lago," the loud, bass-driven screamers of wry political anthems take the stage after a too-long hiatus. These angry, sarcastic, empowered middle-aged rockers—famous for the instructively titled recent "I Came Back to Bitch" and classics "Pretend We're Dead," "Shitlist" and "Wargasm"—demand respect and get it with witty, smart-ass lyrics and sonic endurance. See them at the Glass House with opener Le Butcherettes, fronted by the multitalented Ten Gender Bender, one of the most startlingly original outfits you've ever arrived early to see.

L7 with Le Butcherettes at the Glass House, 200 W. Second St., Pomona, (909) 865-3802, www.theglasshouse.us. 8 p.m. $24.50. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

[THEATER]

Lord of the Laughs

Fellowship! A Musical Parody

Sure, fans of epic Earth-adjacent fantasy medieval quests are fully satiated right now with *Game of Thrones*, but only true *Lord of the Rings* fans know it doesn't even compare. And until that *LOTR* television series comes out (Amazon signed on for at least five seasons, by the way), we can tide ourselves over with something, well, a little different. *Fellowship!* is a musical comedy that follows a (very) loose adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's big trip to destroy the Precious. There are puppets, there are cabaret acts, there are some '80s rock numbers—even some Scientology jokes. So for those of us who know every detail of the story, this is a new way to enjoy it.

Fellowship! A Musical Parody at the Maverick Theater, 110 E. Walnut Ave., Fullerton, (714) 526-7070, www.mavericktheater.com. 8 p.m. Through June 30. $15-$30. —ERIN DEWITT

sat/05/11

[FOOD & DRINK]

Barbecue By the Sea

Waterfront Cook-Off

MORE ONLINE OCWEEKLY.COM

When the smell of the grill is in the air, some of us have no choice but to follow our noses to the source. Today, that aromatic trail will direct barbecue- and chili-lovers to the *Queen Mary* for the California State Championship BBQ competition. Bring your fellow foodies (and any family members you can drag along) to sample delicious bites, watch competitions, try different brews, listen to music and enjoy family-friendly games. So get your custom-designed, wooden, chili-tasting spoons ready for an event sanctioned by the International Chili Society, Kansas City BBQ Society *and* the California State Championship for Chili.

Waterfront Cook-Off at the *Queen Mary*, 1126 Queens Hwy., Long Beach, (877) 342-0738; www.queenmary.com. Noon. $23-$75; ages 4 and younger, free. —SCOTT FEINBLATT

[FESTIVAL]

A FLOCK OF MEMORIES

Like Totally Music Festival

From a musical/cultural standpoint, the 1980s are like the Rasputin of music. Just when you think it has finally lost all of its impact, it returns even stronger. That said, some of the more interesting bands of the decade highlight the diverse Like Totally Music Festival in Huntington Beach. Joining headliners the Bangles and John Lydon's Public Image Ltd. is an All-Star Jam featuring the likes of the Reflexx, Richard Page and local '80s cover band Flashback Heart Attack. Put those old pins in your ears, bust out that can of super-strength hairspray and don your neon tights for this chance to relive the decade of decadence.

Like Totally Music Festival at Huntington State Beach, 21601 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, www.liketotallyfestival.com. 11 a.m. $65-$150. —WYOMING REYNOLDS

sun/05/12

[ART]

This Land Is Your Land

'TIME BOOMERANG'

Need to relieve some stress? UuDam Tran Nguyen's current exhibition at OCMA Expand, "TIME BOOMERANG," allows visitors (on specific days of the week) to break plaster maps as an interactive element of his work, which examines China's territorial ownership over the islands in the South China Sea. Nguyen is specifically interested in the concept of owning land as a form of power, and in various countries, he dropped a bronze cast of his fingertips as an exercise of re-creating that same power. See the multiple stages that Nguyen's study underwent through comprehensive documentation, then help him out with the show's future stages by (cathartically) causing destruction.

"TIME BOOMERANG" at OCMA Expand, 1661 W. Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 780-2130; www.ocmaexpand.org. 11 a.m. Through Sept. 1. Free. —AIMEE MURILLO

[CONCERT]

Not Yawn-Worthy

YAAWN

Featuring the excellent drummer for Alice Bag's current band (and frequent *Weekly* contributor), Candace Hansen, YAAWN are a band that express emotions through epically anarchic vocals. The threesome aren't quite as active as they used to be in terms of performing, which makes this show with Transistor LB, Hayley and the Crushers, and Dirty Limbs at Alex's Bar a special occasion. If you've heard any of their albums, you know their caustic presence at any show is worthy of celebration. Don't be that person who regrets never getting to see them.

YAAWN with Transistor LB, Hayley and the Crushers, and Dirty Limbs at Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim Blvd., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292; www.alexsbar.com. 8 p.m. $6. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

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mon/05/13

[CONCERT]

Link Up

Ari Lennox

Interscope Records' newest hitmaker isn't so new to the world of singing and songwriting—in fact, Washington, D.C., native Ari Lennox has been releasing her soulful mixtapes and EPs on the internet since 2012, earning her a place on J. Cole's label, Dreamville Records. Single after single, the young chanteuse has been edging her way onto the neo-soul pop charts, and her latest album, *Shea Butter Baby*, was one of the most anticipated releases of the year. The up-and-coming star is making her way through North America on her first headlining tour—catch her at an intimate venue while you can!

Ari Lennox at La Santa OC, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana, (657) 231-6005, www.lasantaoc.com. 9 p.m. $15-$65. —AIMEE MURILLO

tue/05/14

[HEALTH & FITNESS]

Let's Ride

Over the Hump Mountain Bike Series

Riding a bike as transportation is admirable and awesome, but there's something to be said for the rough and tumble fearsomeness of taking a mountain bike down some steep hills just for the thrill of it. If this is your idea of a good time, get your toned butt down to Irvine Lake for a weekly race against others in your class (women, men, kiddies, elite or sport, etc.), join a team or create one; results are posted the next day. There's no limit to how many times you can participate along the scenic route, and after each race, riders are treated to Wahoo's tacos and a beer or soda.

Over the Hump Mountain Bike Series at Irvine Lake, off Santiago Canyon Road, Silverado; raceoc.com. 6 p.m. $30-$89; kids, $10. —AIMEE MURILLO

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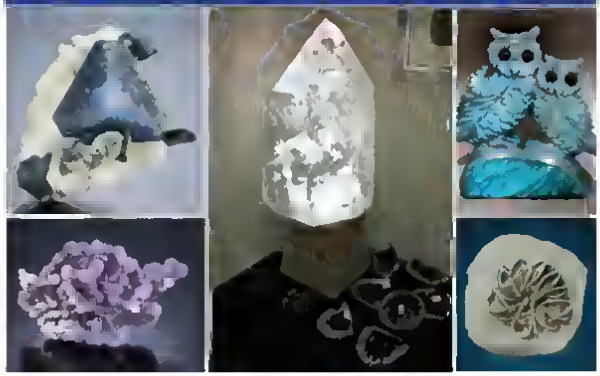

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wed/05/15

[DRAG]

Sissy That Walk

Lip Sync Eleganza

Gather 'round, squirrel friends, because this is the eleganza extravaganza you don't want to miss. Executive Suite's annual Lip Sync Eleganza showdown is bringing together a cavalcade of legendary queens—some of whom you may know from *RuPaul's Drag Race*, among them Pandora Boxx and Ongina—under one roof to square up and showcase their most epic performances. This year's theme is "Pink Party," so come out in your most sickening looks and prepare for each contestant's unforgettable ensembles to blow you away. Show up early for Drag Queen Bingo, sure to bype you up before the main event. And don't forget those dollar bills to tip your favorite queens, as well as donate to the Wings Foundation, which helps fight attendants in need.

Lip Sync Eleganza at Executive Suite Nightclub, 3428 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, (562) 597-3884; www.wingsfoundation.com. 6:30 p.m. $40-$100. —AIMEE MURILLO

COURTESY HERSHEY FELDER

[CONCERT]

DEBUSSY RIOT

A Paris Love Story: The Music of Claude Debussy

Written and performed by pianist, composer and booster Hershey Felder, *A Paris Love Story* is not only a one-man, one-piano tribute show, but also a musicological homage to Impressionist composer Claude Debussy. You may have seen Felder narrating questions about composers on *Jeopardy!* while also performing their music in the category of "Great Composers," which is also the title of his series of concerts. He's already covered Beethoven, Chopin and Irving Berlin, and tonight, he takes the stage at the cozy, 420-seat Laguna Playhouse to bring to life the romantic, numinous, celebratory work of the final musical hero in the series.

A Paris Love Story: The Music of Claude Debussy at Laguna Playhouse, 606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-2787, www.lagunaplayhouse.com. 3 & 7:30 p.m. $84-$120. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

thu/05/16

COURTESY LAGUNA ART MUSEUM

[FILM]

THE NOIR AGE

Murder, My Sweet

Although Hollywood had been monkeying around with noir elements since the advent of sound, the genre came into full midnight bloom in 1944 with the masterpiece *Double Indemnity*. Following quick on its heels down a dank, dark alley, director Edward Dmytryk's B-grade *Murder, My Sweet* reinforced the bleak cynicism of wartime fears that same year and helped to establish key elements for all such films to come. Starring usual song-and-dance man Dick Powell in an unconventional role as the iconic Philip Marlowe, *Sweet* also cemented Claire Trevor as Hollywood's "Queen of Noir"—and you can find her Oscar for another noir, *Key Largo*, at UC Irvine's Trevor School of the Arts! Join historical arts curator Janet Blake for this classic, twisty tale of improbable logic and delectable deception, and swoon over the sexy dames and pitiful patsies of Hollywood's glorious dark age!

Murder, My Sweet at Laguna Art Museum, 307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach, (949) 494-8971, lagunaartmuseum.org. 6 p.m. $5-$7. —SR DAVIES

[CONCERT]

All That Jazz

Muckenthaler Annual Jazz Festival

These days, jazz seems to be a forgotten class in Southern California, but one of the few spaces to continue its preservation is the Muckenthaler Center's annual Jazz Festival. Spanning two months and six concert dates, the festival exposes music fans to a plethora of contemporary artists, each of whom bring a sensational flavor to the genre. Tonight, the Eric Reed Trio, led by the intrepid pianist who lends the group his name, will bless the audience with their modern sound. As the protégé of Wynton Marsalis and collaborator of such legends as Cassandra Wilson and Dianne Reeves, Reed provides a refreshing brand of jazz while reminding us why the genre will never go out of style.

Muckenthaler Annual Jazz Festival with the Eric Reed Trio at the Muckenthaler Center, 1201 W. Malvern Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-6595, themuck.org. 7:30 p.m. $30; series package, $150. —AIMEE MURILLO

FUSION BITES

EDWIN GOEI

More to the Point

Bistro Provincia opens in Dana Point with fusion food and a server who's full of dad jokes

BY EDWIN GOEI

You find the new Bistro Provincia not in the ritzy part of Dana Point that has the luxe hotels, but rather off one of those side streets named after a lantern, next to a tiny neighborhood park that could function as Mayberry's town square. There's a quaint corner market on one end, a barber in the middle, and an Irish tavern on the other. And on this particular Saturday night, it's so quiet it could've actually been Mayberry.

As you walk closer to the hostess podium, you notice you didn't need the reservation you made a week ago. It's 7 p.m., and the restaurant is barely half-full. But you tell the hostess your name anyway. As she chirps that she's the one who answered your email to reserve a table, you realize she's Veronica Diaz, half of the husband-and-wife team that owns the place.

Ms. Diaz leads you into the darkly lit restaurant and past a bar made up of large stones that evokes an underground wine cellar. On the wall, you see paintings with gauzy, Thomas Kinkade-esque scenes of Parisian cafés on cobblestone streets. As waiters in vest-and-tie combos flit about the room, a longhaired twentysomething plunks out a tune on an electric keyboard.

As you settle into your curlicue metal chair, your server arrives. He's an energetic man in his late forties who is full of dad jokes.

"If you like my service, my name is Dana, if you don't, my name is Kevin!" he says with wink.

You find him immediately charming. And when he mispronounces the "lumpia" he recommends as an appetizer, it's so endearing you don't have the heart to correct him. You order it anyway, knowing that it's one of the dishes that makes Manny Diaz's cooking "fusion." At Bistro Provincia, you can have wok-sautéed rice noodles, chile relleno, duck confit and ravioli in the same sitting.

The lumpia are basically egg rolls. Chef Diaz halves the crispy, wrapped cylinders and serves them standing up in thick puddles of sauce that tastes like reduced Thai yellow curry. And although the menu advertises the lumpia as being filled with pulled Jidori chicken, you swear it's crumbly ground beef.

When Dana comes back to ask how you liked them, you're honest and say that they're just okay. You admit you preferred the shrimp chile relleno appetizer. And it is better. Despite looking drab on the plate, this tomatillo-salsa-drenched lump of cheese-stuffed, deep-fried roasted poblano pepper is so bright on the palate it's like eating sunshine.

Dana is pleased when you tell him, "I think I need a squeegee for the rest of this sauce!"

Soon, he brings out the soup of the day. You discover he's split the serving into two cups, since there are two of you. You thank him for the gesture, and as it turns out, each half-cup is exactly the right portion for one person. The soup—a broccoli-and-coconut-curry blend—is perfect. It has just enough of the broccoli bits left whole so that it ends up resembling a less spicy version of moong dal, Indian lentil stew.

Later, when you move on to the entrées, Dana checks on you again. You tell him you're enjoying the braised short rib Bordelaise better than the risotto. You don't elaborate that you thought the risotto seemed more like a side dish. And you certainly don't mention that you were already disappointed when you saw it served in an upright column from a ring-mold, which should disqualify it from being called a risotto. Plus, when you eat it, you find that it's also bland and mushy and tastes mostly of the mashed butternut squash that makes up its bulk.

The braised short rib, on the other hand, you love. It's the kind of beefy block that you tear off strand by strand and let melt in your mouth to savor the slow-cooked tenderness and the seeped-in flavors of red wine. The mac and cheese that Chef Diaz serves with the dish is also exemplary, with orecchiette subbing for macaroni and earthy roasted poblano chiles worked into the cheese sauce.

When he drops off the check, Dana takes the opportunity to repeat his earlier joke. "Remember, if you like the service, my name is Dana, but if you don't, my name is Kevin!"

"Your name is Dana!" you exclaim.

After a pause, he slaps his knee and laughs so hard you realize that you, too, are capable of dad jokes.

BISTRO PROVINCIA
34091 La Plaza, Dana Point, (949) 482-1011, bistroprovincia.com. Open Tues.-Thurs., 4-9 p.m.; Fri., 4-10 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. & 5-10 p.m., Sun., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. & 4-9 p.m. Entrées, $18-$40. Full bar.

WHAT THE ALE
» GREG NAGEL

CA Craft Beer Summit Goes Local

Every September during the past four years, I hop in the ol' black wagon of doom with a trunkload of shenanigans to make the fear-and-loathing trek to our state capital for the CA Craft Beer Summit. It's a weekend packed with interesting seminars and talks, a trade expo, food and brew demos and sponsored events, all capped by one of the best beer festivals in the world, featuring more than 500 beers from the tip-top of California to San Ysidro.

But this year, I may just Lyft to it as the summit's in Long Beach!

The Long Beach Convention Center and Marina Green Park will be craft beer ground zero Sept. 12-14. The event is put on by the California Craft Brewers Association (CCBA), a 30-year-old organization that advocates for the state's $8 billion beer industry, with its nearly 1,000 breweries. And unlike large national beer events such as the Great American Beer Festival, this one offers such craft-beer luminaries as the Lost Abbey's Tomme Arthur, Russian River's Vinnie Cilurzo and Sierra Nevada's Ken Grossman. They and others like them are available for quick chats and photos over a beer, providing you're not too star-struck.

For 2019, the CA Craft Beer Summit boasts 50 education sessions, which are separated into tracts directed at home-brewers, tasting, hospitality and more.

Early bird tickets will be available for one day only on May 14. Passes for the entire weekend are priced comparably to a trip to Disneyland, so getting a discount and planning to experience everything will get you the most value. Head to www.californiacraftbeer.com/craft-beer-summit for more details.

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GREG NAGEL

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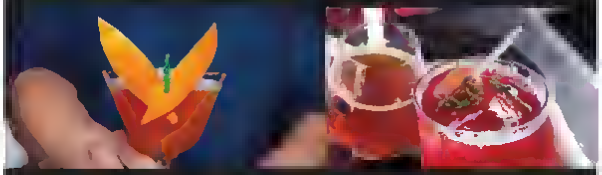

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ERIN DEWITT

Something to Howl About

After flood and fire, Dogz Bar and Grill finally reopens

LONG BEACH LUNCH
» ERIN DEWITT

Talk about tough luck. Back in early 2017, right in front of Dogz Bar and Grill, a delivery truck crashed into a fire hydrant. The substantial flood caused by the incident forced the prime-spot storefront on bustling Second Street to close, subtracting one of the street's few bar options that stay open past midnight.

Fast forward a year and a half, and the casual food joint, known for serving beer at icy-cold temperatures, was weeks away from reopening … but then it was destroyed by a fire. This meant yet *another* year of repairs and renovation.

Finally, Dogz Bar and Grill was able to reopen last month. The remodeled interior is a tasteful improvement. Gone are the cutesy dog-themed decorations and paintings, the surfboards, and the cheeky knickknacks that used to line the walls. But the owners did keep the digital display over the bar that continuously measures the current beer temperature (a frosty 30.2 degrees Fahrenheit at time of my visit). The space is also much more open, with a dog-friendly patio seamlessly flowing between Second Street's foot traffic and the dining section and bar area.

The menu is almost exactly the same; for a place that specializes in hot dogs and Mexican food, it really didn't need to do any fine tuning in that area. But there are a few additions. Dogz switched out the pretzel bites for a pub pretzel, which came huge, hot and perfectly salted alongside two dips—a sweet mustard and a de facto plastic-orange-cheese sauce. There's also a tortilla soup, and the dessert section has doubled thanks to several different frozen treats such as sorbets and bombas.

While the old menu featured pulled-pork sliders, the new one features a burger slider trio—three Hawaiian sweet rolls filled with an abstract-shaped beef patty, grilled onions and a bit of melted Cheddar. The mini burgers are stacked alongside a small pile of golden, house-made potato chips. The dish is a blank slate meant to be customized with the cart of various sauces found at each table.

The sections titled Dogz and Sausagez mirror their former incarnations, with classics such as the Chicago dog, a plump, snappy Vienna beef frank in a sesame-seed bun and piled with yellow mustard, onions, neon-green relish, tomato, a pickle spear and a few sport peppers. It's perfectly savory and juicy, paired with layers of tart vinegar. Among the other standards are a chili dog, a BBQ dog (with barbecue sauce, Cheddar and bacon), the Pepperz Party (a chili dog topped with four kinds of hot peppers) and the N'Awlins dog (topped with a muffaletta of olives, peppers, basil and oregano).

The ever-popular Teenie Weineez option also remains, allowing indecisive guests three different mini dogs of their choosing. Come on a Tuesday and get as many Teenies as you can handle for just $1.50 apiece.

The most noticeable change to Dogz Bar and Grill's menu is the pared-down toppings selection. Before, the list consisted of no less than 30 options, including a dozen different kinds of peppers. Now it's streamlined at 18 and does not include marinara sauce, which was a smart edit.

Weekday specials such as the aforementioned Teenie Weineez Tuesdays or Free Fries Fridays ensures a crowded house the majority of the time. Dogz Bar and Grill seems to be right back to its busy, boisterous, ice-cold-beer-and-hot-dog-slinging self.

DOGZ BAR AND GRILL
5300 E. Second St., Long Beach, (562) 433 3907, dogzbarandgrill.com

PHOTOS BY GREG NAGEL

Party Like Udon Care

Celebrating a birthday with El Mercado's spring menu

I'm not much of a creature of habit, but when the question "What do you want to eat on your birthday?" came up, I could only think of Mercado, a.k.a. downtown Santa Ana's El Mercado Modern Cuisine

The lengthy walk to its bar on your birthday can feel a little bit like dead man walking, with various hip joints and knee bones popping and cracking as if I were visiting the chiropractor. Pro tip: As you age, be sure to time your steps to the beat of the music so people aren't startled by the noises your body makes as you stroll by.

Once I finally made it to an open barstool, I was greeted by bartender Cesar Cerrudo, who has been behind the stick since the restaurant opened in 2016.

Mercado's menu updates regularly, so each visit is akin to dining at a new restaurant. Old favorites and staples remain, such as the heaping mound of carnitas and the ever-popular tlayuda, but spring brings new influenres from other lands and cultures, a reflection of what's happening within a few blocks of the hip yet hidden gem.

I can't say I remember seeing a gastropub-style burger on the menu before, but this time I spotted not just one, but two: the classic, which runs $11 during happy hour, and the Mercado burger, which can be had for a buck more. Both are so dense they should be eaten with a knife and fork.

The biggest spring surprise is perhaps the udon soup, which looks Asian, yet smells like a steaming bowl of caldo de pollo. Blue and white puffy hominy, charred corn, and a jammy hard-boiled egg are joined with crunchy enoki mushrooms. Toasted sesame seeds add a nice depth of flavor to the steamy broth filled with slippery noodles.

The cocktail menu offers eight seasonal choices, each a riff on a classic as seen through Cerrudo's booze goggles. #MercadoModern caught my eye not only because of its inclusion of Montelobos Mezcal, but also because it was the only drink donning a hashtag. The bright mango-orange concoction is served in a stemmed cocktail glass, stainless-steel straw bent outward, with a frozen violet hashtag cube on top. "That's frozen chicha morada," Cerrudo said with a smile.

Judging great cocktails isn't all about looks, aromatics and mouthfeel, as the ultimate compliment to a well-designed drink is that of moorishness. With its balanced smokey-tropical fruitiness, I found #MercadoModern to be incredibly easy to suck down. As the hashtag melts, pick it up with your straw and nibble away at the Peruvian purple-corn ice.

Will I be back on my birthday next year? Perhaps if my old bones can take it.

EAT & DRINK THIS NOW
» GREG NAGEL

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COURTESY PARAMOUNT PICTURES

The Miseducation of the Manson Girls

Charlie Says shines a deeper light on Charles Manson's family

BY AIMEE MURILLO

August 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the Manson family murders, and there's no shortage of inspired content. So far, three feature films that directly reference Charles Manson are on the way: Quentin Tarantino's anticipated (and rumored final directorial effort) *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, *The Haunting of Sharon Tate* (a horror movie out already through VOD, starring Hilary Duff of all people), and *Charlie Says*, a film directed by Mary Harron (*American Psycho*, *I Shot Andy Warhol*) and written by frequent collaborator Guinevere Turner. Also out right now is the ABC documentary series *1969*, which focuses on the Manson family and their killings.

So with all this revived Manson mania, how do you make a film about the subject in a new way that doesn't feel like a bad rip-off of *Helter Skelter*, the 1976 television film based on the book by Vincent Bugliosi about Manson and his depravity? Make a film about the Manson women.

That's what Harron and Turner did in *Charlie Says*. Based slightly off Karlene Faith's book *The Long Prison Journey of Leslie Van Houten: Life Beyond the Cult*, this film directly (and smartly) chooses to focus on the perspectives of three of the women who carried out the wannabe rock singer/cult leader's crimes: Leslie Van Houten, Susan Atkins and Patricia Krenwinkel. They, along with fellow followers Tex Watson and Linda Kasabian, brutally stabbed actress Sharon Tate and her house guests, among them Abigail Folger and Jay Sebring, as well as Leno and Rosemary LaBianca in their respective mansions.

Charlie Says revisits the night of Aug. 9, 1969, on Cielo Drive, but it mainly takes place years later, as the girls serve the first years of their sentences in isolated confinement at a California penitentiary. It is here that they, still clinging to Manson's predictions of a so-called race war and a plan to live underground, are slowly deprogrammed by Faith, then a graduate student who was already working with incarcerated women when offered the unenviable position of teaching the still-young cult followers.

At this point, Van Houten (Hannah Murray), Atkins (Marianne Rendón) and Krenwinkel (Sosie Bacon) are every bit as fervent and steadfast in their beliefs as you'd expect brainwashed cult followers to be. They prattle on about Charlie's teachings about race wars and the existence of fairies, and they protest Charlie's incarceration by shaving their heads. Thus Harron and Turner pointedly pose the question that seemingly everyone has asked about the women since their public trials began: Were these normal young women, under the strange tutelage of this master manipulator and con artist, also victims?

Whether or not you feel sympathy toward them, *Charlie Says* looks into the women's deep faith in their man Charlie, helping the viewer to understand how powerful his mythos was during a time when countercultural figures reigned supreme in youth circles. Demystify Manson as a madman, and their subsequent realization of the severity of their crimes makes their story all the more tragic.

All in all, this is perhaps one of the best cast films about the Manson family that I've ever seen, with a strong Murray as Van Houten, Chace Crawford as Tex Watson, Cameron Gellman as a spot-on Bobby Beausoleil, Kayli Carter as Squeaky Fromme (who, as one of the most visible members of the Manson family, deserved a larger role), and Matt Smith as Manson. While I panned Smith's portrayal of the abrasive '80s photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, Smith's methodical weirdness here made for the best Manson ever.

As much as I loathe seeing more films and television shows about Manson and his hive, Harron and Turner's version did the subject matter right by ripping away the sensationalism of the family's horrible crimes and showcasing the humanity in the Manson women. By peeling away their crazed layers, we see they were just women who were cravenly manipulated to kill off more of themselves by those around them.

CHARLIE SAYS

was directed by Mary Harron, written by Guinevere Turner, inspired by the book by Karlene Faith, and stars Hannah Murray, Marianne Rendón, Sosie Bacon and Matt Smith.

Warriors, Come Out and Play-yay

BY MATT COKER

PARAMOUNT PICTURES

El Chicano. Ben Hernandez Bray's 2018 drama is about East LA twin brothers (Raul Castillo in a dual role) choosing to live their lives differently and winding up on opposite sides of the law. *Regency Westminster, (714) 893-4222. Thurs., May 9, 11:40 a.m. & 10 p.m. $8.50-$10.50; also at Starlight Triangle Cinemas, (714) 650-4300; starlightcinemas.com. Thurs., May 9, 11:40 a.m., 2:20, 5, 7:40 & 10:20 p.m.; Starlight Cinema City, (714) 970-6700. Thurs., May 9, 4:50, 7:30 & 10:10 p.m. Call theaters for ticket prices*

Her Smell. Writer/director Alex Ross Perry's new indie is about the self-destructive lead singer (Elisabeth Moss) of a fictional '90s, all-female punk-rock band. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., May 9, 2, 5 & 8 p.m. $7-$10.*

***The Warriors:* 40th Anniversary.** In the New York City of a dystopian near future (as envisioned in Walter Hill's 1979 cult classic), the leader of the Gramercy Riffs is assassinated by the psychotic leader of the Rogues, and the Warriors are blamed. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org Thurs., May 9, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30 & 8:30 p.m.; Sat., 8 p.m. $7-$10.*

Chondra Pierce: Unashamed. The Christian comedian searches the world for people who took stands for Jesus, no matter what it cost them. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., May 9, 7 p.m. $14.*

Tolkien. Dome Karukoski's new bio-drama is about the formative years of the orphaned author J.R.R. Tolkien (Nicholas Hoult). *Regency South Coast Village, (714) 557-5701. Opens Thurs., May 9, 7:15 p.m. $9-$12; also at Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Opens Fri.; call for show times and ticket prices.*

Shadow. Commander Yu (Deng Chao) uses a body double (also played by Chao) in a plot against Pei's king (Zheng Kai). *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 2:30, 5 & 7:30 p.m.; Sat., 12:30, 3 & 5 p.m.; Sun. & Wed., 2:30, 5 & 7:30 p.m., Mon.-Tues., 2:30, 5, 7:30 & 10 p.m., Thurs., May 16, 2:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

Charlie Says. See "The Miseducation of the Manson Girls," page 20. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 5:30 & 8 p.m., Sun., noon & 10 p.m., Mon.-Tues., 2:30, 5, 7:30 & 10 p.m.; Wed.-Thurs., May 16, 10:15 p.m. $7-$10.*

Senior Thesis Cycle 8 Film Screenings. These films premiere, but not necessarily in this order: *Brain Dead; Grief Rage and Her Keepers; Permanenser; The Hole* and *The Sisters of St. Benedict*. Titles are subject to change, and the films are also live streamed. *Chapman University; chapman.edu/dodge. Fri., 7 p.m. Free*

The Man Who Killed Don Quixote. A cynical advertising director (Adam Driver) is mistaken for Sancho Panza by an old Spanish shoe maker (Jonathan Pryce) who believes he is Don Quixote. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri.-Sat. & Mon.-Thurs., May 16, 10 p.m.; Sun., 7:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

The Rocky Horror Picture Show. Live shadow cast troupe KADS performs in Santa Ana, while it's Midnight Insanity in Long Beach. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 11:30 p.m. $7-$10; also at Art Theatre, arttheatrelongbeach.org. Sat., 11:55 p.m. $9-$12.*

The Met: Live in HD. ***Dialogues des Carmélites.*** Life changes are in store for Blanche (Isabel Leonard) after the fearful daughter of the Marquis de la Force has her carriage held up by a mob on the eve of the French Revolution. The opera is sung in French with English subtitles. *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Sat., 9:55 a.m. (live), Wed., 1 & 6:30 p.m. (encore). $16-$24*

Mommie Dearest. Frank Perry's 1981 adaptation of Christina Crawford's best-selling tell-all about her abusive mother, screen queen Joan Crawford, is a campy classic thanks to Faye Dunaway chewing up the scenery in the title role. *Art Theatre, arttheatrelongbeach.org. Sat., 11 a.m. $9-$12; also at the Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sun., 4 p.m. $7-$10.*

Monty Python and the Holy Grail. Follow Arthur, King of the Britons; Sir Lancelot the Brave; and Sir Robin the Not-So-Brave-as-Sir-Lancelot as they follow God's directive to find the Holy Grail in the 1975 cult classic. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sat., 6 p.m. $7-$10.*

Epic Home Haunts. HorrorBuzz and Midsummer Scream present this 90-minute documentary by Saga Studios that celebrates legendary Southern California haunts. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sat., 7 p.m. $10.*

Graduate Thesis Cycle 0, 7 & 8 Film Screenings. Grad student filmmakers premiere their works, but not necessarily in this order: *Bad Dog, Blocked; Blood Light;* and *I Can See the Star*. These are also live streamed. *Chapman University; chapman.edu/dodge. Sat., 7 p.m. Free.*

Batman Forever. Bruce Wayne (Val Kilmer) takes in orphaned circus acrobat Dick Grayson (Chris O'Donnell). *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Sun., 1 & 4 p.m. $10.50-$12.50.*

What We Left Behind: Looking Back at Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. The one-night-only event includes a round-table discussion on the making of the documentary and, while supplies last, an exclusive two-sided poster for audience members. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Mon., 7 p.m. $12.50.*

Batman & Robin. The Caped Crusader (George Clooney), Robin (Chris O'Donnell) and Batgirl (Alicia Silverstone) go up against Mr. Freeze (Arnold Schwarzenegger) and Poison Ivy (Uma Thurman). *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Tues., 4 & 7 p.m. $10.50-$12.50.*

Grease. Aussie exchange student Sandy (Olivia Newton-John) and bad-boy gang leader Danny (John Travolta) hook up during the summer, but their relationship changes once school starts. *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Tues., 7:30 p.m. $8.*

Saga of Tanya the Evil—the Movie. Imperial Army Major Tanya Degurechaff avoids death and a trip to hell while battling the Republic Army. *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Tues., 7:30 p.m. $12.50.*

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas. Hunter S. Thompson (Johnny Depp) is supposed to be covering a car race in the Mojave Desert, but Sin City keeps getting in the way. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Wed.-Thurs., May 16, 2, 5:30 & 8 p.m. $7-$10.*

Close Encounters of the Third Kind. A suburban dad (Richard Dreyfus) is visited by extraterrestrial intelligence before playing with his mashed potatoes. *Starlight Cinema City, (714) 970-6700. Wed., 7 p.m. Call for ticket prices.*

A Touch of Sin. Jia Zhangke's 2013 drama is based on real news stories about ordinary Chinese people struggling to deal with a rapidly changing society. A light dinner and discussion follow the film. *UC Irvine, McCormick Screening Room, Humanities Gateway 1070, Irvine; uci.edu. Wed., 7 p.m. Free.*

Back to the Future. Michael J. Fox plays a teen who travels back in time to when his parents were still in high school. *Regency South Coast Village, (714) 557-5701. Wed., 7:30 p.m. $8.*

Cowboys & Aliens. Absolution town folks, their leader (Harrison Ford), Apache warriors, an amnesiac gunslinger (Daniel Craig) and other outlaws unite against alien forces. *Fullerton Public Library, (714) 738-6327. Thurs. May 16, 1 p.m. Free*

The Exhibition Room Silent Film Series. Women in silent films are celebrated on "Mimosa Day." *The Exhibition Room—Long Beach Craft Cocktails, 1117 E. Wardlow Rd., Long Beach, (562) 826-2940; www.theexhibitionroom.com. Thurs., May 16, 8 p.m. $40. 21+*

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

Smash It Up

Unleashing the anarchist within at OCMA

BY DAVE BARTON

I'm standing at the edge of the second floor of Orange County Museum of Art's temporary space in South Coast Plaza Village. At the top of the staircase, I'm holding a cheap plaster reproduction of an old map of Europe. A dozen people are watching me. "Count off," says the jacketed docent, who has cleared the path.

"Like a '10-9-8' kind of count off?" I ask.

"Yes," she replies.

"Okay . . . 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1."

I let go.

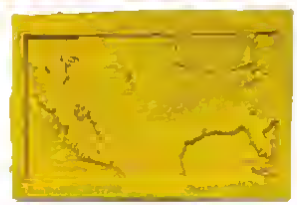
The chalk-white representation of a long-gone World Order plummets to the floor, smashing against a pile of plaster maps others have already dropped. It shatters with a BOOM that echoes through the gallery.

I silently thank Vietnamese artist UuDam Tran Nguyen for his dense art installation "TIME BOOMERANG California Edition—From S.E.A. Sea Atolls to the Next Dead Stars," wipe the white dust off my hands and scribble a few lines in my notebook.

Nguyen's mouthful of a title is as complex as the exhibition, and as with any thoughtful work, it takes a few minutes to put things together. Starting with the idea that a child uses his hand to measure things—and the image of a land grab is the perfect childish symbol for an empire—the artist has cast his hand, then cut off the tips of all five fingers. Those sculpted fingertips will be dropped into bodies of water bordering five of the continents, as a performative way to reclaim territory. It's essentially a nonsense gesture, but just as with many useless things signifying hope, he persists in doing it anyway. A digitally printed version of the artist's skeleton, laid out in a circle on the gallery floor, seconds the idea. Indigenous people would often bury bones in the territory they wished to claim. (We still do a version of the same, of course, but now it's via the blood and corpses of our war dead. That the artist comes from a country the U.S. once invaded is certainly no coincidence.)

Nguyen's humanist intent and step-by-step process from foundry to ocean are laid out clearly in the helpful curation notes, aided by several videos that can also be found online. Make sure to read them, and then join in on the overthrow of an empire.

The politic collage work of Los Angeles artist York Chang's solo show "To Be Wrong With Infinite Precision" is sometimes framed, sometimes mounted, the blown-up black-and-white and color pictures liberated and remixed from newspapers, juxtaposed against one another, with added words trimmed from headlines. Less interested in creating new images than in provoking obvious associations between composites, Chang's work is a fairly basic lesson in punk collage 101. An image of a young boy throwing a baseball is pasted over the corner of a black-and-white still of riot police ready to go to battle (*The Pick-up*), the Pope, hands outstretched, blessing children, is placed opposite three guys in suits, hands raised, about to testify in a court proceeding; the pictures linking the Church's pedophile problems with the resultant legal troubles (*Common Knowledge*); and *Civilian (Factograph)* is a picture of protesters scuffling with a policeman as news cameras hover over the incident like vultures. Set opposite a still of Russian dancers, there's the suggestion it's all just a performance, its title playing off the similarity of the words *civilian* and *civilized*.



The most interesting piece to me was actually an anti-collage, *Forensic III*, intriguing precisely for what it takes pains not to show. The 72 Polaroids are reversed so that we see just the backsides of the prints, solid lines of black with white borders, resembling a page from the redacted Mueller Report.

Chang's thoughtful work ponders the ways that images conflict with headlines and vice versa, how both are used to manipulate and misdirect; he is attempting to disarm them—or at least turn them on their head—by reusing them within a different context. The problem—and I liked the exhibition a great deal—is that the work falls back on the most obvious of associations. Given the unadorned way Chang designs his work, it's unlikely he'll be opening up a new world to you or even challenging your perceptions. If we're smart enough to "get" it—and I include myself here—then we can smugly pat ourselves on the back that the left-leaning political statements are in line with our own thoughts. In this day and age, I'm uncertain that something that simply confirms what we already believe is a good thing. Shouldn't we be asking for a little bit more from our art?

"UUDAM TRAN NGUYEN: TIME BOOMERANG CALIFORNIA EDITION—FROM S.E.A. SEA ATOLLS TO THE NEXT DEAD STARS" AND "YORK CHANG: TO BE WRONG WITH INFINITE PRECISION" at the Orange County Museum of Art, 1661 W. Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 780-2130, www.ocmaexpand.org. Open Thurs., 11 a.m.-8 p.m., Fri.-Sun., 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Through Sept. 1. Free.

ARTSOVERLOAD

» AIMEE MURILLO

May 10-16

"THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF COMICS": In anticipation of the National Comics Society festival later this month, this exhibit showcases the range of various styles through the art form's history. Fri., noon-6 p.m., Sat. noon-5 p.m., Tues.-Thurs., noon-8 p.m. Through June 1. Free. Huntington Beach Art Center, 538 Main St., Huntington Beach, (714) 374-1650, www.huntingtonbeachartcenter.org.

IRVINE KOREAN CULTURAL FEST: Celebrate with food, art, music, crafts and entertainment. Sat. 10 a.m. Free. Irvine Civic Center, 1 Civic Center Plaza, Irvine, (949) 724-6620, irvinekoreanfestival.com.

ZOTCON: UC Irvine's first anime expo serves as a platform for manga, anime, comics, gaming and general Japanese culture. Sat. 10:30 a.m. $5; UCI students and alumni, free. UCI Student Center, 311 W. Peltason Dr., Irvine, www.facebook.com/zotcon.

THE ARTIST LODGE + STUDIO GHIBLI TRIBUTE GALLERY: This artist free-for-all includes a Studio Ghibli themed art show, more than 40 vendors selling their work, a raffle, pancake artists, cosplay life drawing, painting workshops and more. Sat. 5 p.m. Free, but workshop tickets are $5. Boys and Girls Club Stanton, 11050 Cedar St., Stanton, theartistlodge.com.

"M.A.U.: A TAROT COLLECTION": Graduate student Nicole Yang presents the two-year culmination of her study of the art of divination and its design aesthetics, redesigning the symbols of the tarot with her own twist. Sat. 5 p.m. Free. Cal State Fullerton Visual Arts Department, Building F, Leo Freedman Gallery, Arts Drive & North State College Boulevard, Fullerton, www.fullerton.edu.

"PRONE TO EXAGGERATION": Painters Rich "Dianzo" Blanco, Richard J. Frost and Bob Doncaste display new portraits. Sat. 7 p.m. Free. Dark Art Emporium, 256 Elm Ave., Long Beach, (562) 612-4118, www.darkartemporium.com.

VAUDEVILLE NIGHT: Vintage store is encouraged for this 1920s-themed cabaret show featuring comedy, magic and burlesque. Sat. 8 p.m. $12-$20. 21+. The Federal Underground, 102 Pine Ave., Long Beach, (562) 435-2000, www.federalunderground.com.

MASS APPEAL JURIED STUDENT EXHIBITION 2019: A selection of art work ranging from paintings to drawings to fashion. Mon.-Thurs., May 18, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. Orange Coast College, Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion, 2701 Fairview Rd., Costa Mesa, (714) 432-5072.

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Passionate Promoters

Sellout Events are, like, totally invested in OC's music scene

BY JIMMY ALVAREZ

TIM POLECAT AT LIKE TOTALLY FEST 2018

JOHN GILHOOLEY

Being a concert organizer is one of the toughest gigs on the planet. We all know someone who's in a band, DJs on the weekends or hooks wedding singers. However, when we think of concert organizers, companies such as Goldenvoice, Live Nation or Synergy Global Entertainment (SGE) come to mind. Aside from years of hard work, to get to the top of the totem pole, you have to be a people person, build the necessary relationships, and create an infrastructure and network. But mostly, you have to be able to stomach the countless unpaid late nights putting on shows.

Luckily for Orange County, there's a local concert organizer bringing back our glory days: Sellout Events, led by Scott Tucker and Vanessa Turbay.

The Huntington Beach-born-and-raised Tucker created Sellout Events 20 years ago as a small booking company for local bands, incorporating a who's-who of the punk and ska worlds. He started at some of OC's favorite haunts that have since, sadly, disappeared, among them the Lava Room, Kona Lanes, the Rhino Room and Live Bait. Tucker's ventures into larger events with promotions at the *Queen Mary* were so successful that he was able to move on to even larger shows and snowboarding, moto and BMX events. He also cultivated relationships with radio stations such as KROQ, Jack FM and, in recent years, OC-based KX 93.5.

But in 2011, that life changed for him. While scouting the band Deadbolt at the Doll Hut, he met Turbay. They hit it off immediately and soon became drinking buddies who took in a ton of shows. Turbay had an impressive resumé that included more than a decade in business and insurance procurement, as well as facilitating technical recruiting, according to Tucker. Not only did she have great business sense, but she also shared his passion and ear for music. Impressed by her organizational and business skills, Tucker asked Turbay to join Sellout in 2013.

Soon, Sellout was managing shows in former Santa Ana venues the DTSA Underground and Diego's Rock-n-Roll Bar & Eats, as well as the Yost Theater. With Turbay at his side, he says, Tucker felt energized to go after larger bands, festivals and corporate events. "It takes a lot of coordination to put on a large event," he says. "Vanessa was able to bridge that gap for us and connected our network in a more efficient way. ... That made all the difference in the world."

Among the top-notch talent Sellout has landed over the years are the Dickies, the Adicts, Slightly Stoopid, Pepper, Reel Big Fish, Suburban Legends, Goldfinger, Face to Face, Green Day, English Beat, and many more.

But the duo's booking success is only half the story. Given Sellout's Huntington Beach roots, Tucker and Turbay set their eyes on reviving the local music scene. They wanted to bring back the glory days of venues such as the Golden Bear, as well as create an atmosphere that lives and breathes music in Huntington. In 2017, Sellout became the fourth owner of the local institution Gallagher's. Over the past 25 years, the Irish pub has been a great place to see local artists and larger acts, including the likes of Mickey Avalon, Tommy Tutone, Pato Banton, the Blasters, Angelo Moore of Fishbone and Jesse Hughes of Eagles of Death Metal. The venue also offers standup comedy and an '80s KROQ night with DJs Richard Blade, Jed the Fish and Freddy Snakeskin.

Sellout has also brought to Huntington Beach the flashback juggernaut known as the Like Totally Music Festival. In previous years, the lineup has included the Alarm, Berlin, A Flock of Seagulls, Dramarama, Missing Persons and the Human League. And for its fourth incarnation, happening Saturday, the festival offers the Bangles, Public Image Limited, ABC, the Romantics, the Smithereens, the Tubes, Greg Kihn Band, Animotion, China Crisis, Josie Cotton, Jerry Miller of the Untouchables, Richard Page of Mister Mister, Debora Iyall of Romeo Void, Deon Estus of Wham, and Martha Davis of the Motels.

As with any festival, there's a reason why certain organizers survive. And if anyone knows what it takes, it's Warped Tour grand poohbah Kevin Lyman, who believes it's the toughest job you'll ever love. When asked what organizers impress him, he named two: John Reese of SGE and Tucker of Sellout.

With such a prosperous company, Tucker could probably put on a Sellout show anywhere and make more money. So why does he stay in Huntington Beach?

"My first job was selling shaved ice on Main Street when I was 12," Tucker recalls. "Vanessa and I live here; we love this city. It's where we want to be, and we will always support it."

LIKE TOTALLY MUSIC FESTIVAL
featuring the Bangles, Public Image Limited, ABC and more, at Huntington State Beach, 21601 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, www.liketotallyfestival.com. Sat., 11 a.m.–9 p.m. $65. All ages.

STAY INFORMED

OCWEEKLY

JOHN GILHOOLEY

Ch-Ch-Chain-ges

Chain Reaction partners with concert giant Live Nation

BY NATE JACKSON

For more than two decades, Chain Reaction has been Anaheim's Little All-Ages Venue That Could. It helped to birth many local and touring acts in the punk, indie and hardcore scenes that would go on to become huge, but the club is now getting a new start of its own, as Live Nation Entertainment announced on May 2 that it has formed a strategic partnership with Chain Reaction.

Andy Serrao, the venue's longtime owner and co-president of Fearless Records, confirmed it will be getting shows and help with its festivals held at adjacent venues, but, he says, the club will remain under his direction. "We have a joint venture—that's basically the best way to describe it," Serrao says. "They let us be as autonomous as we want, and if they have ideas for us, they let us in on the bigger shows."

When the company initially contacted Serrao about the partnership, Live Nation's offer was to help Chain Reaction in terms of booking acts related to its wheelhouse of indie, punk, hardcore and metal, Serrao says.

This news comes on the heels of Live Nation buying the Observatory venues in Santa Ana and San Diego shortly after announcing a booking deal in December 2018. Covering the gamut of venues from FivePoints Amphitheater to the House of Blues in Anaheim, all signs point to Live Nation's sweeping takeover of much of Orange County's live-music scene as regards ticketed events and national tours.

Prior to Live Nation partnering with Observatory in Santa Ana, Chain Reaction was one of many small venues that found it nearly impossible to compete with the larger venue's crushing hold on touring acts as well as bigger festival audiences. "It gets frustrating. Sometimes, it doesn't matter what your relationship is with a band, they're too big to play Chain," Serrao says. "So naturally, we should align ourselves with a company that will allow us to be part of the conversation and hold onto some of these artists and keep developing in the market."

According to Live Nation, the deal will "amplify" concerts at Chain Reaction and Live Nation's other clubs in the market, while also raising the Anaheim venue's profile. Serrao had helped to produce and promote the inaugural edition of Dance Gavin Dance's Swanfest in March, which drew 7,500 fans, as well as OC festivals such as Chain Fest and High and Low Fest.

"This is an awesome chance for Live Nation to leverage our relationships to play a role in helping seed an already-robust local presence that Chain Reaction has nurtured for decades," Ben Weeden, COO of Live Nation Clubs & Theaters, said in a statement released by the company. "We are working together across all of our Orange County and San Diego venue portfolios to increase the great shows coming through our rooms, and now Chain Reaction is part of that as well."

The financial terms and other details of the strategic partnership were not disclosed.

Chain Reaction opened its doors as an all-ages venue in 1996 and has hosted bands such as Maroon 5, Fall Out Boy, Panic! At the Disco, One Republic, Young the Giant, Paramore, Rise Against and Pierce the Veil.

Recently, the club had begun selling beer from local and national breweries in an effort to make the venue more attractive to bands who wanted to bring in an older crowd. "Before, people used to be bummed that you could only bring in a young audience because we couldn't sell beer," Serrao says. "Now that we have it, it's an easier conversation for bigger bands. I don't know if it's a driving force, but it helps make the venue more attractive to bigger acts."

Chain Reaction was also tapped to present a number of Goldenvoice shows including a pre-Coachella gig featuring *Weekly* cover boys the Garden.

Despite this new partnership being uncharted territory for the local venue, Serrao says he hopes the changes will lead to a positive reaction.

NJACKSON@OCWEEKLY.COM

REE GUTIEAREZ/COURTESY OF DIRTY SCIENCE

Friday

BAD SUNS, CARLIE HANSON 8 p.m., $20 all ages Thn Observatory 3503 S Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (714) 957 0600 www ehsnrvatoryoc cam.

BELLS ATLAS, OEVIL SEASON: MOONHEART 8 p.m., $18 21+ The Wayfarnr 843 W 19th St. Casta Mesa (949) 764-0039 www wayfarercm ccm

IGNITE; FOURTH IN LINE 8 p.m..$20 21+ La Santa, 220 E Thnd St. Santa Ana (657) 231-6005; www.lasantaoc cam.

IVAN ESTRELLA OE LOS ANGELES—TRIBUTE TO VICENTE FERNANOEZ. 7 p.m., $15, all ages Housn of Blnes at Anahnim GardenWalk, 400 W Disney Way Anaheim (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblnes.com/anahelm.

LOWW FI FEST 8 p.m., free all ages. Garden Amp, 12762 Mam St. Gardea Grove (949) 415-8544 gerdonamp.cnm

Saturday

LIKE TOTALLY MUSIC FESTIVAL. 11 a m–9 p.m. $85 all ages Huntington State Beach, 21601 Pacific Coast Hwy., Hantington Beach, www.iketatallyfnstival cnm

MONOLORD, HERE LIES MAN 9 p.m., $14 21+ La Santa 220 E Thnd St. Santa Ana (657) 231-6005 www lasantaoc cam

PHANTOM PLANET 8 p.m., $12, all ages. The Constellation Room 3503 S Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (714) 957 0600 www ehsnrvatoryoc cam.

PUNE ROCK KARAOKE, THE GRINGOZ, 20 MINUTE MILE 8 p.m. $10 all ages The Wayfarer, 843 W 19th St. Costa Mnsa (949) 764-0039 www wayfarercm.cnm

TRISH TOLEOO 8 p.m., $20-$65 all ages The Yost Thnater 307 N Spnrgeon St., Santa Ana www yostthaater cam

WILO CHILO—OOORS TRIBUTE. 7 p.m., $22.50, all ages. House of Blues at Anahnim GardenWalk, 400 W Disney Way Anaheim (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblnes.com/anahelm.

Sunday

THE BOUNCING SOULS, THE BRONX, SKINNY LISTER, SHARP SHOCK. 7 p.m., $25, all ages. The Observatory 3503 S Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600 www ehsnrvatoryoc cam

YAAWN TRANSISTOR LB, HAYLEY ANO THE CRUSHERS, OIRTY LIMBS 8 p.m., $6, 21+ Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St. Long Beach (562) 434-8292; www.alexsbar.com.

Monday

ALRIGHT SPIOER; DA DI MOVE, ROEBUCK & THETWO OOLLAR BILL BANO 7:30 p.m., free 21+ The Wayfarer, 843 W 19th St., Costa Mesa (949) 764-0039 www wayfarercm.com

ARI LENNOX, BABY ROSE, RON GILMORE, MIKHALA JENE 9 p.m.,$15-$65 21+ La Santa, 220 E. Thnd St. Santa Ana (657) 231-6005 www lasantaoc cam

LOLO ZOUAI, JEAN OEAUX. 8 p.m., $13-$50 all ages. Thn Observatory 3503 S Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana..(714) 957-0600; www.ehservatoryoc com.

Tuesday

ELHAE. 8 p.m., $15, 21+ La Santa. 220 E. Thnd St., Santa Ana..(657) 231-6005; www.lasantaoc cam.

JESSE, GOODY GRACE, HEARTS <3 8 p.m., $20, all ages. The Observatory 3503 S Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana..(714) 957-0600 www ehservatoryoc.com.

Wednesday

BLU & EXILE; CHOOSEY, DAG SAVAGE; CASHUS KING, PISTOL MCFLY, SIRPLUS. 8 p.m. $15 $18 21+ The Wayfarnr 843 W 19th St., Costa Mesa (949) 764-0039 www wayfarercm cam

BOOGIE; KB DEVAUGHN, BOBSY SESSKINS, BILEY 8 p.m. $14-$75 all ages. Thn Observatory 3503 S Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (714) 957-0600 www ehservatoryoc cam

RIFF RAFF 8 p.m., $28-$25, 21+ Thn Sidehar Rock N-Roll Kitchnn, 122 E Commonwealth Avn., Fullnrton, (714) 871-7469 www slidnharfullnrton.com.

SOUNOS LIBE OISCO, OCHAV, CHAPIS, GOLD SHIMMER: 8 p.m. free 21+ Alex s Bar 2913 E Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292; www.alexsbar.com.

Thursday, May 16

PHARLEE; LOOM, OEATH CHANT 8 p.m. $5, 21+ Alex s Bar 2913 E Anahnim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292; www.alnxsbar com.

ROB VICIOUS: 8 p.m., $20, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (714) 957-0600; www observatoryoc.com

SHOOTER JENNINGS, PEARL. 9 p m., $20 21+ La Santa. 220 E. Thnd St., Santa Ana (657) 231-6005; www lasantaoc cam

TUNNEL VISION, LOS NAUTICALS, CYDEWAYS 8 p.m. $8-$10 21+ Thn Wayfarnr 843 W 19th St., Costa Mesa (949) 764-0039; www wayfarercm.com

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5/1E	FOREVER ROO (ROD STEWART TRIBUTE)
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5/23	PUOOLES PITY PARTY
5/24	OINGO BOINGO FORMER MEMBERE
6/25	BENEFIT FOB OICK OALE
5/26	BLINO MELON
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6/2	SERPENTINE FIRE (EARTH, WIND AND FIRE TRIBUTE)
6/7	ASIA FT. JOHN PAYNE
6/E	BRETT OENNEN
6/11	JOHN PAUL WHITE
6/14	GARY HOEY
6/1E	OSB (JOURNEY TRIBUTE)
6/1E	BEE GEES GOLO
6/20	CRY5TAL BOWERSOX
6/21	CAEH'O OUT
6/22	Y&T
6/23	AN EVENING WITH JOHN HIATT
6/28	JAHIR JOPLIN TRIBUTE
6/2E	THE CHAIRMAN AND THE BOARO (RAT PACK TRIBUTE)
7/3	THE WAILERS
7/E	MICKY OOLENZ
7/E	BEATLES vs STONES
7/12	THE PETTY BREAKERS
7/13	LOS LONELY BOYS
7/1E	JEFFERSON ETARSHIP
7/1E	HENRY KAPONO
7/20	HIHOER
7/23	TEO NUGENT

R/11
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6/20
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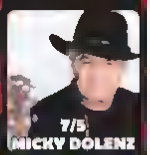

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7/19
HENRY
"K KAPONO

8/7
THE BACON
BROTHERS

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7/2R	RTBUNZ AND FARAH	9/22	GABY PUCKETT
9/3	NDNK	9/27	QUEEH NATIOH
8/7	TNE BACDN BROTNEER	9/28	DUEEN NATIDN
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		10/11	OOKKEN
8/21	JUSTIH HAYWARD	10/13	JUOY COLLINS
8/29	SAVOY BROWN	10/24	TAR REHDIT
8/30	CINOERELLA'S TDM KEIFER	11/R	SUPER DIAMOND
		11/1D	DAVIO WILCDX
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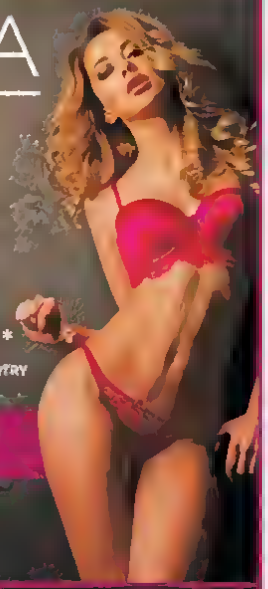

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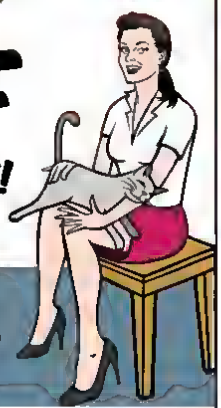

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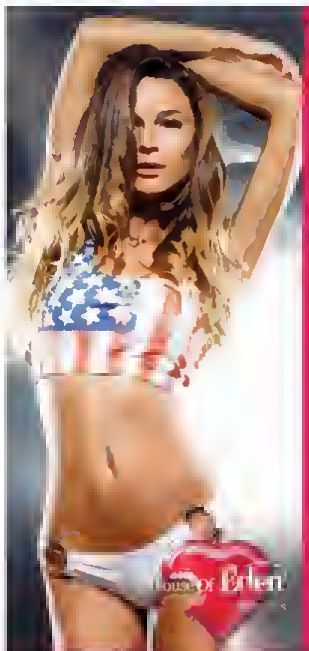

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SAVAGELOVE
» DAN SAVAGE

I'm a 43-year-old straight woman, and I spent the majority of my 30s celibate. At 40, I realized that while I wasn't interested in dating, I was tired of my vibrator. I also realized that it was time to go forth and fuck with the body I had instead of waiting for the idealized body I was going to have someday. Over the past three years—despite being as fat as ever—I've consistently had fun, satisfying, exciting, creative sometimes weird, occasionally scary, but mostly awesome sex. One guy I met on Craigslist was particularly great: awesome kisser, amazing dick. He came over, we fucked, it was excellent, we chatted, he left. This happened about four times. And then CL shut down the personals section. The only contact info I have for the guy is the anonymous CL address, and it no longer works. He has my Gmail address (the one I use for dating sites), but he has not emailed me. I'm not a crazy stalker (I swear!), but he once told me he teaches at a university in our area, and I managed to find his photo and contact info on the school website. So I know how to reach him—but that's a spectacularly bad idea, right? Unless you think it isn't? If a dude I'd fucked a few times tracked me down at my job, I would freak out. But I keep thinking, Would it really be SUCH a bad idea to send him ONE email? Should I just accept that it was great while it lasted? Or should I email him and run the risk of pissing off/freaking out a nice guy?
Can Really Envision Every Possibility

Don't do it, CREEP—don't do that thing you already know you shouldn't, that thing you wouldn't want some dude to do to you, that thing you were probably hoping I'd give you permission to do.

That thing? Don't do it.

You're engaged in what's called "dickful thinking" when guys do it—at least that's what I call it, CREEP. It's like wishful thinking, but with dicks. Men convince themselves of something improbable ("I bet she's one of those women who like unsolicited dick pics!") or unlikely ("Showing up at her workplace will convince her to take me back!") because it's what they want. Think of all the guys you've ever known who said, "She wants me!" when in reality, he was the one who wanted her. Clitful thinking may be rarer than dickful thinking—women being less likely to think with their genitals and/or being more risk averse due to socialization, slut-shaming, and the ever-present threat of gendered violence—but it's not unheard of for a woman to rationalize unacceptable behavior (contacting this man at work), deploy a self-serving justification (it's just ONE email), or solicit a "You go, girl!" from a sex-advice columnist when what she needs to hear is "Hell no, girl!"

Again, don't do it. This guy has your email address and he knows how to reach you. And since you didn't have all that fun, satisfying, exciting, creative sex over the past few years with only him, CREEP, I shouldn't have to tell you to focus on your other options. But since your clit is doing your thinking for you right now, I must: Leave this dude alone and go fuck some other dudes.

I have a desperate question for you. I've worked with a vivacious 30-year-old for five years. For three and a half years, she had a five-in boyfriend. She had a different boyfriend recently. I'm 58 years old and not good-looking. She is always sweet to me and compliments me. She's said that I'm a genius and a gentleman, that I'm a hoot, and that I have a confident walk. I've also overheard her say that she likes older men. However, a few months ago, she walked up to me out of the blue and said that she just wants platonic relationships with co-workers. Then I overheard her say to another co-worker, "I put out a sign; he will figure it out eventually." But which sign did she mean? The "platonic" thing, or the constant kindness?
Wondering On Reciprocated Kindnesses

This probably isn't what you wanted to hear either, WORK, but this woman isn't interested in you—and if you weren't engaged in dickful thinking, you'd know that. But your dick has somehow managed to convince you that you're the "he" she was referring to when she talked about sending someone a sign. But you need to ask yourself—and it's best to ask right after you masturbate, as that's when we're least prone to dickful thinking—which is likelier: she went out of her way to let you know she's not interested in dating anyone at work and you're the "he" she was referring to, or the "he" she was referring to was one of the roughly 4 billion other men on the planet and not a co-worker? I don't mean to be cruel, WORK. I just want to stop you from doing something that could get you fired or screw up what has up to now, been a pleasant work relationship. While kindness can sometimes signal romantic interest, the full weight of the evidence here—including the fact that she didn't send an unambiguous signal when she was briefly single—indicates otherwise.

I'm a cis, white, gay male—partnered 15 years, monogamous for the first 14. About a year ago, my partner agreed to let me play on my own outside of the relationship. The rules: eat when he's in town, no one comes home, no regulars. I've taken good care of myself (sexual frustration + gym)—and at 50, I find that I'm attracting guys half my age. Sometimes, in the heat of passion, they call me "daddy." This took a LOT of getting used to, but am I going to stop what we're doing to discuss nomenclature? Anyway, I refuse to call them "sir" because I find that creepy. "Baby" doesn't really work for me, either—it's what I call my partner. That leaves "boy." Which is fine if they're white. The problem is, some of the jaw-droppers calling me "daddy" have been black. And I absolutely refuse to call a black guy "boy." I want to leave them feeling amazing, not brooding on race relations and power imbalances. So what does a beautiful, dark-skinned, daddy-loving young man want to be called by the older white guy pounding him?
Daddy's Uncomfortable Race Relations

Good for you for being able to think clearly even when your dick is hard—even when it's buried in some hot guy—but I have to fault you for not reasoning your way to the obvious answer.

You're a white guy who doesn't feel comfortable calling a black sex partner "boy," which is usually what gay guys who call older partners "daddy" want to hear. But instead of asking the black guys you're fucking what they want to be called, DUHR, you opted to ask some other old white dude what *he* thinks the black guys you're fucking *might* want to be called. Do you see the problem here? The guys you should be asking about this [illegible] are *the guys you're fucking*. And you don't even have to call a halt to the action in order to ask them! Next time you're balls-deep in some hot guy and he says, "Fuck me, daddy," growl and say, "That's right, I'm your daddy—and what are you?" If he says, "I'm your boy," then that's obviously what he wants to be called.

On the Lovecast *(savagelovecast.com), Is it time for a gay homeland? Contact Dan via mail@savagelove.net, follow him on Twitter @fakedansavage, and visit ITMFA.org.*

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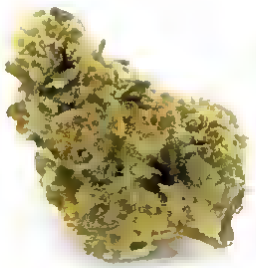
Toke of the Week

» JEFFERSON VANBILLIARD

Biscotti



I'd be willing to bet that most people reading this wouldn't be able to pick biscotti out of a lineup of cookies. However, if you were to replace those cookies with these gorgeous flowers, they'd stand out like diamonds in the rough.

To be honest, most of the flowers we choose to smoke have a lineage so crossed it would make a Southern family blush. That's why I have a hard time getting excited over anything other than cannabis that is labeled as such. Some of the tastiest buds we've smoked have been in the hybrid realm, and this week's pick is no different.

Behold the Biscotti and its snow capped peaks that will keep you frosty when the temperature rises above 90 degrees. We can't get enough of the floral haze that rises as each cultivated bud is ablaze. An eighth of it will set you back $60. There's a big difference between being high and being *high*, and this jazz cabbage is your one-way ticket to Coolsville, daddy-o. (Sorry about the "daddy-o" bit; I'm kinda buzzed off these cookies.)

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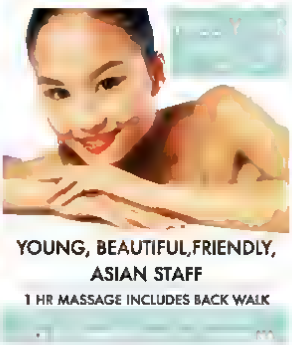

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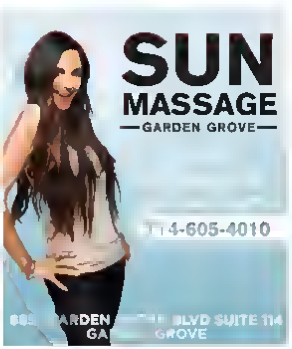

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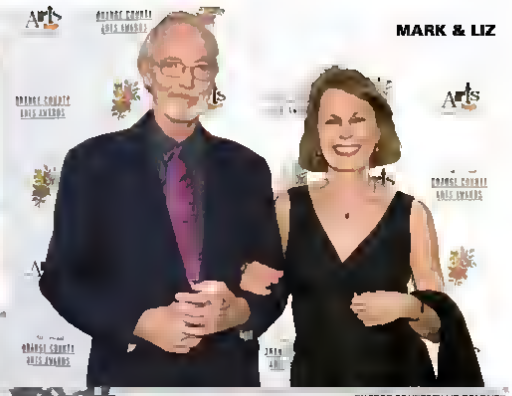
Memories of Mark Chamberlain

My life with the adventurer/photographer/anti warrior

BY LIZ GOLDNER



MARK & LIZ

PHOTOS COURTESY LIZ GOLDNER

I met Mark Chamberlain on March 30, 2003, 10 days after the Shock and Awe invasion of Iraq. I visited his gallery, BC Space in Laguna Beach, to gather information for a review I was writing on his exhibition "Pretty Lies: Dirty Truths." I had never seen an art show with such a powerful anti-war message. And I had never met a man like Mark. He was gracious, insightful, intelligent and articulate, and he manifested these characteristics as he explained the exhibition to me, while often segueing to comments about life, art and politics. As I listened, I became aware of his inner strength, passion, sense of mission and, especially, powerful sense of adventure.

I often asked Mark about his experiences while stationed in Korea during the American War in Vietnam. He told me about meeting damaged soldiers who were sent there before returning home, about how deeply their war stories affected him. He explained that during his two years of mandatory service, he had the opportunity to learn how corrupt the processes and politics of war really were.

Yet with the spirit of Friedrich Nietzsche—who is credited with the quote "That which does not kill us, makes us stronger"—Mark explained in a letter to a friend, "I was fortunate just to survive two years of active duty during a very bizarre era. Fortuitously, I picked up a camera as a means of focusing my attention and observations while maintaining a certain objective detachment, but also providing a way to share my views with others. I came to embrace the power of the photograph to communicate ideas, not just to convey images of things or activities."

I soon recognized that Mark's military experience changed the trajectory of his life, influencing him to move to Southern California, become a photographic artist, open a gallery and ultimately mount many anti-war exhibitions.

I also understood that Mark's efforts to save the world through art shows was only part of his mission. He had co-founded the Laguna Canyon Project in 1980, a photographic documentation of Laguna Canyon Road, and with art partner Jerry Burchfield, he was documenting changes in the area over time. As he often said, "Local residents see the canyon as a greenbelt buffer, while others view it as virgin territory ripe for development. But we felt it imperative to call into question prevailing conceptions of progress. We used photography, video, sculpture, performance, installations and collaborative events to address these concerns." In fact, that art project was a profound influence in saving Laguna Canyon.

Mark and I initially became friends, spending hours discussing politics and art; we later became lovers. I moved into his home in October 2010 and spent seven and a half years with him, absorbing his profound wisdom about life; his knowledge of world affairs, art and pop culture, and enjoying his wacky sense of humor. I also admired his natural elegance and grace.

Over the years, we shared many meals, watched historical programs on TV together; and reminisced about political, social and personal events. Mark often related to me his adventures while growing up near the Mississippi River in Dubuque, Iowa. As a child, he explored the area's hills and bluffs and rode boats through its streams and channels. He talked about his father often sending him to their home's unabridged dictionary to look up words, explaining that this ritual became the genesis of his ability as a wordsmith. Stimulated by his tales, I soon began sharing mine of my Jewish childhood in the New Jersey suburbs, just outside of Manhattan.

Mark and I attended many art events and exhibitions over the years and went on several memorable vacations. Our most significant adventure was a week spent on his houseboat on the shores of the Mississippi River, near Dubuque. During our time there, Mark took me all over the town he had grown up in, telling me about his endless adventures, riding his bike and horses, climbing trees, swimming and fishing, playing in his high-school band and on the school's tennis team, and serving a stint as student council president. I found myself reliving his escapades with him. Like a time traveler, I was witnessing the development of an extraordinary individual who seemed to carry with him his intrinsic childhood enthusiasm, along with the belief that he could accomplish whatever he set out to do—including saving Laguna Canyon.

Mark and I worked on many projects together over the years and edited each other's writing; he also often provided me with photos for my art-related articles. Our last project together was writing the book *The Laguna Canyon Project: Refining Artivism*, published last year by Laguna Wilderness Press. In words by Mark, myself and six other contributors, the book describes the development of the Laguna Canyon Project and relates how it helped save the canyon from suburban development. We worked on it for five years, often battling about words, phrases, descriptions and intent. But we finally completed the book just before Mark became ill with lung cancer in December 2017.

By that time, we had worked through our differences, and our mutual writing and editing had become glorious. We experienced a profound meeting of our minds, so much so that I sometimes felt as though our brains had melded together, as though Mark's thoughts and words were flowing through me, and vice versa. It was the apex of our relationship.

Mark's final adventure was his battle to overcome cancer. When he received his diagnosis, I told him that I would always carry on his legacy, that I would do my best to convey to the world his amazing accomplishments.

A few days before Mark passed away, I visited him in the hospital and told him how much I appreciated and loved him, how much I had grown during our relationship. He called me his "Pygmalion," implying that through his inspiration, influence, encouragement and imparting of his wisdom, I had grown in my life, relationships and work. One year after Mark's passing, I continue to maintain the perfection in my heart, mind and soul that I experienced when he was alive.

I recently related my experience with Mark to an artist friend, who wrote to me, "It was very moving to see your affection for him and how our conversation and my work connected to your experience and life together. It is a gift when art can create connections with human emotions and interactions."

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Liz Goldner is an arts and culture journalist based in Laguna Beach. For more information about her projects, including the aforementioned Laguna Canyon Project, visit www.lizgoldner.com.

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